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THE Nation.

# FUELING THE AFGHAN WAR

## OIL, CORRUPTION AND REPRESSION IN KYRGYZSTAN

ARAM ROSTON
DAVID TRILLING

MAY 10, 2010
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# Letters

## Through the Looking Glass Darkly

PITTSBURGH
After reading Richard Kim's "The Mad Tea Party" [April 12], I saw the light and converted to Teabaggerism. Has anyone noticed that the monogram for "Cloward-Piven" is "CP," the same as for "Communist Party"? And that the reverse, "PC," is the same as for "political correctness"? And that their article was published in 1966, which, of course, contains the number of the Antichrist, with the first 6 diabolically disguised as a 9? I eagerly await a Fox "News" offer of my very own show.
MICHAEL PASTORKOVICH

LONDON
If you combine the first three letters of "Cloward" and the last three of "Piven," you get "cloven"!
NORBERT HIRSCHHORN

BROOKLYN, N.Y.
Frances Fox Piven is a target precisely because her work has always supported democratic politics from below. She has devoted a lifetime of scholarship to studying how ordinary people, particularly poor people, fight for social change to improve their lot in life. Case studies she has researched over several decades on the Revolutionary era and the abolitionist, labor, 1930s unemployed workers', welfare rights and civil rights movements all underscore a basic truth: people can redress the imbalance of power and wealth in our society when they organize and disrupt business as usual. That's the last thing Glenn Beck et al. want Americans to realize, and it helps explain why they are working overtime to offer a counternarrative.
DOROTHEE BENZ

GERMANTOWN, N.Y.
I worked for Richard Cloward at Mobilization for Youth in 1966 and was there at the creation of the "Strategy to End Poverty." Were Cloward and Piven radicals? You bet, but so was everybody—from the poverty lawyers to school activists (remember Ocean Hill-Brownsville?) to housing advocates and right on down. For God's sake, it was the '60s!

At no time did Cloward and Piven consider welfare rights a brief against capitalism, and you'd have to be a lunatic to consider what they were doing to be out of the mainstream. Compare the peaceful and orderly welfare rights movement with the Harlem, Watts, Newark and Detroit riots.

I am astounded at the sudden infamy of Cloward and Piven (which Dick would have loved; Frances was always the more practical of the two). To suggest that what the community organizers were doing to help the poor was sinister, unpatriotic or intended to bring down the pillars of our country through disruption is a barbaric misreading of a nation in what was arguably its most creative, if not the messiest, period of the last half of the twentieth century.

Cloward and Piven were partners at every relationship level. The energy that produced the "Strategy" came from a combustible combination of love and commitment to a better life for the poor. I ran into Fran on the subway shortly after Dick died. She said she was going to a meeting at Columbia to organize the poor—did I want to come along? I said no, but I loved that she was still fighting for the oppressed.
ARTHUR SCHIFF

## There You Go Again, Israel

WESTPORT ISLAND, ME.
Congratulations on "Obama's Israel Problem" [April 12]. As one who served on three UN missions to Palestine, beginning with the Bernadotte Mission in 1948, I suggest that the president tell Israel that America will continue to defend it against aggression and support it financially *provided* Israel returns to its 1967 borders, phases out West Bank settlements and leaves Gaza. Until Israel initiates actions to those ends, we should suspend diplomatic relations and notify the Security Council accordingly.
BRUCE STEDMAN
*UN assistant secretary general (ret.)*

letters@thenation.com

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# Breaking the Banks

When the financial crisis first engulfed the world, opinion leaders rushed to explain it as a freak of nature, like a "perfect storm" or a tsunami that comes every 100 years. Subsequent revelations destroyed that nonsense. Like famines, financial crises are man-made. This one was made in America—invented on Wall Street and enabled by Washington complicity, Democrats and Republicans alike.

EDITORIAL

This message was delivered again by the SEC's recent fraud charges against Goldman Sachs. The investment house sold poison to unwitting customers—financial instruments deliberately designed to fail. Sure enough, they failed, but they also helped to poison the entire system.

People are asking if anyone will go to jail. No, not yet. The SEC only charges a "civil" offense—Goldman's failure to disclose that its hedge fund partner, John Paulson, stacked the deck. But the case has the potential to rock Wall Street and Washington politics. First, the facts scream out for deeper investigation. Securities law usually allows Wall Street con men to avoid prosecution by paying off swindled parties. Still, bankers and traders must be feeling queasy, because the Street is awash in similar manipulations—conflicts of interest that in other business sectors often qualify as criminal fraud.

Furthermore, the Goldman case could stiffen the spine of senators now working on financial reform legislation, which began as the White House's utterly inadequate response to the economic catastrophe. Thanks to this scandal, there's a chance that toughening amendments will greatly improve things. Sherrod Brown's, for example, would shrink the size of bloated mega-banks. Blanche Lincoln is pushing a hard crackdown on dangerous derivatives. The proposed Consumer Financial Protection Bureau could be rescued from bank lobbyist efforts to strangle it. And Bernie Sanders is trying to put a hard cap on credit card interest rates.

Maybe Senate reformers can stiffen President Obama's spine too. His reform strategy essentially would have turned the mess over to the Federal Reserve. His premise was folly, since the Fed had cheered on the deregulation that enabled the bankers' reckless greed. And by putting the Fed in charge, Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner and White House adviser Larry Summers accepted the bankers' proposed solution: tinker with the regulatory system but do not greatly disturb Wall Street's business model. That lets politicians evade the need to enact laws that compel real change. House Democrats went along.

The Senate, however, is now a more promising arena than expected. First, Chris Dodd, lame-duck chairman of the Banking Committee, proposed a more ambitious reform: dump the central bank as "super-regulator" and strengthen provisions to curb oversize banks. His draft is marred by weak points and may not survive the floor action, but the fight for serious reform is still alive.

GOP leader Mitch McConnell responded with his usual hypocrisy. He accused Obama and the Democrats of ratifying the bailout of mega-banks. As evidence, he cites the Senate bill's $50 billion liquidation fund ($150 billion in the House version), to be collected from bankers, not taxpayers, but anticipating more bank crises in the future.

Republicans are falsifying the politics (since they are really fronting for bankers), but they happen to be right on the larger point: notwithstanding Obama's claims, the Democratic legislation does not put an end to "too big to fail"; it merely authorizes Treasury and the Fed, with other regulators, to shut down

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COVER DESIGN BY GENE CASE & STEPHEN KLING/AVENGING ANGELS; ILLUSTRATION BY KAREN CALDICOTT

VOLUME 290, NUMBER 18, MAY 10, 2010
PRINTED APRIL 21

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**SUBMISSIONS:** Queries only, no manuscripts. Go to www.thenation.com and click on "about," then "submissions" for a query form. Queries may be mailed to The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003. SASE for poems.

**INTERNET:** Selections from the current issue become available Thursday night at www.thenation.com.

Printed on 100% recycled 40% post-consumer acid- and chlorine-free paper, in the USA.


dangerously overexposed financial firms that pose risks to the system—if officials so choose. But leaving this difficult choice to unelected regulators is a pipe dream. Those same regulators repeatedly failed in the past. If Congress doesn't have the nerve to break the behemoths into smaller pieces, lap-dog regulators will not do the dirty work for them. During the last generation, the central bank and other agencies allowed banks to amass profits while taking on larger, more dangerous risks. Regulators lacked the will to intervene and spoil the good times for important clientele. When the system became endangered, it was too late for discipline.

Wall Street's players decided, correctly, that government would come to their rescue if they went too far. And they did. That smug assumption must be smashed by strong new laws and safeguards, or taxpayers will be on the hook for more odious bailouts in the future.

Citizens need to direct their anger at weak-kneed lawmakers. Organized people are often outgunned by organized money, but people still have a shot at winning this fight—and terminating political careers if they don't. Dodd's bill includes strongly worded limits on the incestuous bank-to-bank borrowing that evaded the old ceilings on leverage. Senator Robert Menendez is going after the off-balance-sheet gimmicks banks used to hide debt. Senators Carl Levin and Jeff Merkley would forbid bankers from playing self-interested games against their customers, as Goldman did.

Paul Krugman, among other commentators, thinks bigness is not the problem and we should tolerate too-big-to-fail bailouts. Reform, he says, is like equipping the fire department to put out a burning building. His metaphor left out the real solution: fire prevention. Government needs to enact a new building code for the banking system—a set of stern prohibitions that protect the community from the carefree firebugs of Wall Street. The way to avoid future bailouts is straightforward: eliminate the too-big-to-save banks.

WILLIAM GREIDER

# Loose Tea

COMMENT

When tea party organizers chose the Washington Ellipse as the setting for their Tax Day protest, they were undoubtedly thinking of its theatrical potential. Behind looms the Washington Monument, an obelisk to the hero of American Revolution and Constitution and a fitting symbol of the tea party's esprit de corps. In front stands the White House, whose occupant, according to protesters' signs, is busy plotting more taxes, more communism and the end of America. Those who took the podium borrowed from the surrounding majesty to endow their struggle with an epic righteousness: "We are going to keep faith with every generation since 1776 that has successfully passed the baton of freedom to the next generation. We will not allow that…chain of freedom to be broken on our watch," declared Congresswoman Michele Bachmann. But beyond the rhetoric and amid the crowd of a few thousand, the concerns were on a smaller scale—like about incandescent light bulbs.

That's what inspired one woman, Dot, to drive down from

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# Noted.

***NATION* INTERN MAKES GOOD:** With Britain's general election on May 6, **Liberal Democrat** leader **Nick Clegg** (*Nation* intern, class of '90) has shot to the stratosphere like ash from **Eyjafjallajokull**, causing a seismic shift in the political terrain. As Britain's "unelectable" third party, the Lib Dems are used to coming in honorably last. But after the April 15 televised debate, Clegg was almost universally acknowledged as the winner, with the Tories' **David Cameron** and Labour's **Gordon Brown** tripping over each other to "agree with Nick." More than one poll since then has put Clegg's party in the lead—and relegated Labour to the bottom of the heap. The affable Clegg has even been hailed half seriously as Britain's **Barack Obama**, with a downloadable "Hope" poster on the *Guardian*'s website to prove it.

The moment may blow over: Britain's winner-take-all electoral system and decades of gerrymandering favoring the two main parties make it unlikely that the Lib Dems can win enough seats to take 10 Downing Street, even with a majority of the popular vote. But the past few days have shown the depth of people's discontent with politics as usual: with the corruption revealed by the MPs' expenses scandal and the Tories' dependence on tax-exempt billionaires; with bankers' bailouts and fat bonuses, bureaucracy and broken promises. Many of the Lib Dems' policies are to the left of Labour's. They opposed the Iraq War and would scrap Britain's Trident nuclear submarines; they're for more redistributive taxes and against ID cards; like Obama (and some Tories, too), they want to break up the banks' retail and investment arms.

It's Clegg's persona as the straight-talking outsider, though, that's won the voters' hearts. He has no big-business cronies to placate; his mantra is fairness and his manner that of the honest guy next door. He may well hold the balance of power in the next Parliament; at the very least, his rise will hasten the end of the undemocratic voting system that has kept his party languishing forever in the wings. Style can be a kind of substance, too. MARIA MARGARONIS

**THE SANDERS STANDARD:** The debate over healthcare reform illustrated the extent to which, when it comes to fixing broken systems, Washington's definition of a repair is fluid. While Republicans are satisfied to say no, Democrats don't always know how to say yes. And that will be even more true as the Senate wrangles over financial services reform. Thankfully, **Bernie Sanders** is separating fact from fiction. While the legislation crafted by Senate Banking Committee chair **Chris Dodd** offers a rough outline for reform, Sanders says the promise of change will be made real only if the bill is amended in four ways.

The Vermont independent—who voted against deregulation more than a decade ago and then doggedly challenged the conventional wisdom of former Federal Reserve chair **Alan Greenspan** through the boom and bust 2000s before finally voting against the 2008 bank bailout—knows what needs to be done. First, break up big banks, because "it is simply not acceptable that a small handful of giant financial entities can exert such enormous influence over the economic well-being of hundreds of millions of Americans." Second, make Wall Street part of the real economy by freeing up credit to create millions of jobs by rebuilding our manufacturing base, transforming our energy system and addressing our infrastructure crisis. Third, cap credit card interest rates at 15 percent, because current rates are "not only obscene but, according to every major religion, immoral. Banks cannot be allowed to engage in usury."And fourth, end Fed secrecy so that Americans can find out which major financial institutions received trillions of dollars in near-zero-interest loans. Says Sanders: "It's time we had transparency at the Fed so that the American people know what our central bank is doing with taxpayer dollars."

A radical agenda? Hardly. The Agenda Project and others have proposed far more detailed and aggressive structural changes, which merit consideration. But if the Sanders standard is not met, the promise of reform will remain just that—a promise—and the reality of too-big-to-fail banks, boom-and-bust economics and a system that rewards greed while penalizing hard work will remain. JOHN NICHOLS

**ICE'S EASY TARGETS:** The Bush administration was notorious for arresting noncriminal undocumented people to fill quotas. Between 2004 and 2006 the administration raised the arrest quota for the **National Fugitive Operations Program** eightfold while simultaneously eliminating the requirement that 75 percent of those arrested be criminals. But last August, Homeland Security Secretary **Janet Napolitano** publicly broke from Bush-era policies, focusing instead on arrest and deportation efforts of "dangerous criminal aliens."

But not everything has changed. A controversial memo written by **James Chaparro**, director of detention and removal operations at **Immigration and Customs Enforcement** (ICE), and disclosed by the *Washington Post* on March 27, revealed that expelling criminals is not, in fact, ICE's only priority—it wants to beat last year's overall deportation record. Chaparro notes that although ICE is on track to meet its goal of removing 150,000 "criminal aliens" in the 2010 fiscal year, the overall removal rate is projected to be just over 310,000—"*well* under the Agency's goal of 400,000." Chaparro outlines five strategies to meet this target, including increasing detention space to hold more detainees and launching prison sweeps to find more candidates for deportation and a "surge" in efforts to arrest those guilty of lying on visa applications or re-entering the country after being deported.

On March 30 the **ACLU** called on leaders in Congress and ICE "to establish transparent immigration enforcement and detention policies." According to the ACLU's **Joanne Lin**, "the preoccupation with reaching the number 400,000 has placed intense pressure on all corners of ICE." There is also widespread worry that agents will fill ICE's arbitrary quotas by seeking easy targets rather than focusing on criminal or violent offenders.

Moreover, as the ACLU's **Laura Murphy** rightly notes, "It is alarming that a high-level ICE director is instructing field agents around the country to enforce policies that are completely out of sync with the policy goals set at the highest levels of ICE and Homeland Security." It seems, once again, ICE has missed the memo. ERIN SCHUMAKER

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Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. Dot is concerned about the deficit and the healthcare bill that "nobody read," but most of all she is panicked about light bulbs. "The government is already starting to fine people if you have the incandescent kind," she said, "but if cap and trade passes, then you're going to have each home audited, and that information is going to be listed to real estate agents, and you won't be able to sell your house."

Dozens of tea partyers I spoke with repeated some version of Dot's tale of government intrusion, little lies laced with tiny truths. "With this consumer protection agency," one man told me, "the government is going to make it illegal for you to have more than two credit cards." A woman in a red-white-and-blue pantsuit said, "There's a charter school in New York City teaching children how to be political activists—Muslim activists." Each of these stories lurks in the substrata of tea party blogs, and many are simply warmed-over right-wing myths that predate the tea party itself. What impresses is the fine-grained obsessiveness with which these ideas are pursued; I came to Washington looking for Ahabs, but the tea partyers I met are preoccupied with chasing minnows of their own imagining, not hunting the great white whale of government.

What does this kaleidoscope of kookiness add up to? According to a recent *New York Times*/CBS News poll, tea partyers are richer, whiter, better educated, older, more male and more likely to be employed than the rest of America. In other words, they largely come from society's "haves," who now worry, as Thomas Edsall argues in *The Atlantic Monthly*, that "the competition for resources cannot be resolved by…economic growth," and so are rallying to hold on to their wealth, status, authority and autonomy. Or as one tea party sign put it, YOUR FAIR SHARE IS NOT IN MY POCKET. For those on the left who believe that government should act as an agent of redistribution, this evidence should put to rest the idea that the tea party is a constituency we can work with. The question is, How useful are they to the GOP?

Earlier in the day, a coalition of groups, including FreedomWorks and the Tea Party Patriots, unveiled the Contract From America, a ten-plank agenda determined in part by an online poll of tea party activists. Comprising slogans like "Protect the Constitution" and "Stop the Pork," mixed with reversals of Democratic proposals like "Reject Cap & Trade" and "Defund, Repeal, & Replace Government-Run Health Care," the Contract is almost entirely bereft of policy ideas. In that vein, it is a rebuke of Republicans like Congressman Paul Ryan, who released the detailed "Roadmap for America's Future" earlier this year, and House minority whip Eric Cantor, who has urged the GOP to put forth a specific legislative agenda for 2010 and beyond. Although the Contract and Ryan's Roadmap share the presumption that government is too big and too intrusive, the similarities end there. The Contract is just 613 words long; the Roadmap goes on for forty-three pages, and while not as comprehensive as Ryan claims, it covers issues like tax codes, Social Security, job training and universal healthcare. Most important, Ryan frames his program in the language of shared growth and opportunity. Copping a page from Reagan's "trickle-down theory," he holds that "each American's pursuit of personal destiny" makes a "net contribution to the Nation's strengths as well."

All of this, I suspect, fails to capture the heads and hearts of tea party patriots. Fed a steady diet of paranoia and emotional appeals to vague concepts like freedom and liberty, they appear uninterested in the details of governing, to which even the Republican Party's elite pay lip service, and unable to espouse a vision, however cramped, of collective interest. Their logo and logic is simply DON'T TREAD ON ME. That might work, for now, in securing enough "haves" to muck up GOP primaries. But it is hard to see how, in a nation still tilting toward the "have-not" column, the tea party approaches anything close to an enduring national political force. Heaven help us if I'm wrong. RICHARD KIM

## Calvin Trillin, Deadline Poet

### 'SEC Accuses Goldman of Fraud in Housing Deal'

—*New York Times* Headline

They're doing God's work, their CEO said.
They're kings of The Street. They are regal.
So now we must ask if God ever knew
That some of his work was illegal.

# The Tribe of SNCC

*Raleigh, North Carolina*

The US attorney general credited the 1960 sit-in movement with paving the way for Barack Obama's presidency at a fiftieth-year celebration of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee held here in mid-April. The meeting drew a thousand emotional participants and represented a passage to a new generation of hundreds of young organizers. Eric Holder spoke at the same Raleigh site where SNCC was founded as a network for the exploding sit-in movement, which began in Greensboro on February 1, 1960. Holder told the crowd, "The nation is in your debt."

COMMENT

"There is a straight line from those lunch counter sit-ins to the Oval Office today, and a straight line to the sixth floor of the Justice Department, where I serve," Holder said. He pledged to strengthen civil rights enforcement and to try to reverse policies that have incarcerated hundreds of thousands of young men and women of color. "We are counting on you to rekindle the spirit of 1960 and build on SNCC's achievements," he said. "You look strong to me. This army is not disbanding. There still is marching to be done. Stay as committed as back then."

Holder's speech attracted little or no attention in the mainstream media. But if a primary purpose of the conference was to claim a historic legacy, his remarks were important. Before the 1963 March on Washington, SNCC was criticized privately by

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# Liberals and Progressives Need A New Strategy in the Obama Years

## Come to the Strategy Conference

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**THE OBAMA YEARS** The 2008 elections revealed the great yearning of a majority of Americans for a world based on peace, social justice, generosity, environmental sanity, and recognition that our well-being is tied to the well-being of everyone else on the planet. To the extent that Obama and Congressional Dems have failed to fight for a world based on those principles, and have at times moved in the opposite direction (e.g. rejecting Medicare for All or even a public option in health care reform, escalating the war in Afghanistan, abandoning their promises on human rights, coastal drilling and limiting the impact of corporate lobbyists, bailing out the banks but not those losing jobs and homes to the economic crisis) they have opened up a chasm of despair (and even humiliation on the part of many who allowed themselves to hope for something different)—thereby creating the space for a racist and potentially quasi-fascist movement led by Sara Palin and Tea Party reactionaries who will do the work of the corporate elite—downsize and dis-empower government in the minimal ways it tries to restrain corporate avarice and protect those most hurt by the ups and downs of the capitalist market.

So here is the problem for progressives: we have to both protect the liberals from the anger their policies have generated, because we don't want the quasi-fascists to take their place—so we can't be about bashing Obama or the Dems and many of us still have hopes that they can play a valuable role—and yet the only way we can effectively protect the liberals is to openly criticize what is misguided in their policies, and to put forward an alternative that really embodies the best in liberal and progressive thought—ideas that might put them back on the right path, though visionary progressive ideas will at first be dismissed as "unrealistic" or "utopian." We need you to come to D.C. to strategize with us on how best to build that progressive movement—and to say "no" to the Inside-the-Beltway realists and pragmatists who have led liberals and progressives into their current mistaken and unpopular path. Join us at our conference and at our demonstration at the White House!

The Network of Spiritual Progressives' seeks a New Bottom Line so that corporations, educational/legal/medical institutions, government laws and policies and even personal behavior gets evaluated as rational, productive or efficient to the extent that they maximize love and caring towards others, kindness and generosity, ethical and ecologically sensitive behavior, rationality and scientific enquiry, and enhance our capacities to respond to the universe with awe, wonder, radical amazement, humility and joyous celebration. This direction appeals beyond the traditional left/right debates and facilitates openness to a progressive analysis.

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- **A Global Marshall Plan** (developed by the Network of Spiritual Progressives and just introduced into Congress as H.Res 1016 by Congressman Keith Ellison) to end global and domestic poverty, homelessness, hunger and inadequate health care and education as well as to repair the global environment. www.spiritualprogressives.org/gmp
- **End the War on Terror and Replace the Dept. of Homeland Security with a Department of Global Well-being.** Our well-being and security depends on the well-being of everyone else on the planet. Terrorists should be redefined as an international police problem to be combated by alliances of various national police forces—and no longer seen as a serious threat to the survival of the United States (which they have never been). The monies wasted on chasing after terrorists could better be spent by drying up the swamps of hatred and upset at the U.S. by developing economic and political polices that demonstrate genuine caring for the well-being of everyone on the planet. The best path to "homeland security" is a Strategy of Generosity (as manifested in the Global Marshall Plan) to replace the military-oriented Strategy of Domination that defines contemporary American politics. Come help us implement a nuanced and sophisticated strategy. **If you can't come to the conference please help us develop public support for the ESRA and the Global Marshall Plan. Join the Network of Spiritual Progressives.**

**Info & Registration: www.spiritualprogressives.org/conference or call 510-644-1200**

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President Kennedy as a group of "radicals" and "sons of bitches." Representative John Lewis, who preceded Holder on the Raleigh stage, was under severe pressure from the Kennedy administration and mainstream civil rights leaders to tone down the speech in which he famously demanded to know, "Where is our political party?" Those early frictions subsided as the Kennedys became allies. Former Justice Department official John Doar, now 90, attended the reunion and was welcomed warmly.

SNCC became "a blip in the dominant [civil rights] narrative," said 37-year-old Tufts historian Peniel Joseph. Historicizing SNCC is important, he said, though there is a danger that "glorifying" the early SNCC implies that a "bad" SNCC developed after 1966, with the rise of Black Power, calls for self-defense and revolutionary internationalism. At the conference there was no effort to distance the organization from its more radical phases. The room was jammed with old militants of all stripes: Amiri Baraka gave a presentation on the Black Arts Movement. Kathleen Cleaver, ex-wife of Eldridge Cleaver and now a teacher at Emory University, stood cheering for third graders from Oakland, where the Black Panthers had been headquartered. Joseph himself is writing a comprehensive history of the late Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture).

The historian Taylor Branch was one of the few to question whether SNCC inadvertently contributed to what he called the "shocking distortion of history," in which SNCC's role has been largely erased. "The empirical achievements of the 1960s are buried under amnesia," Branch lamented. "Many Americans don't know and appreciate the way the reforms we won have benefited them." He urged more attention to nonviolence and to the gains, however token, in opening up the Democratic Party while the Republicans were purging their black delegates at the 1964 convention.

The fact that the Raleigh conference was overwhelmingly interracial was a sign that many old antagonisms have been largely healed. A women's workshop asserted the role of SNCC in the rise of the women's rights movement, another once-contentious issue put to rest. Dimmed the most was SNCC's early leadership in opposing the Vietnam War. That opposition began as early as 1964 and resulted in the expulsion of founding SNCC member Julian Bond from the Georgia legislature in January 1966.

By comparison, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were little mentioned during some forty-five workshops and forums. In fairness, it is safe to assume the participants were overwhelmingly critical of the current wars; that point was driven home by keynote speakers like the Rev. James Lawson and Harry Belafonte. But the main focus of the workshops was SNCC's civil rights impact.

The most important question was the future. That was the focus of two plenary sessions, which amounted to a ritual transition within the SNCC tribe. In the sanctuary of the First Baptist Church, the grown-up "children" rose one by one to take their elders' places while hundreds wept, clapped their hands and sang. The following morning Bob Moses, the legendary leader of the 1964 Freedom Summer, and his counterpart in CORE, Dave Dennis, led a conversation about pushing for a constitutional amendment guaranteeing the right to quality education for every American. The idea was made real by the presence of young organizers with the remedial Algebra Project and the Young People's Project, aimed against economic and educational disenfranchisement and mass incarceration. As the first SNCC stood with the demonized of the Black Belt, this newer generation is organizing the demonized of the inner cities and juvenile prisons.

After Moses finished, Albert Sykes from Jackson, Mississippi, rose to represent the Young People's Project. Sykes, who began working with Moses when he was a sixth grader thirteen years ago, said, "We are transitioning from the sit-in movement of 1960 to a stand-up movement of young people. For us, literacy is the next frontier. And we're gonna need your moral capital, your financial capital, lawyers to get us out of jail, and we need to spread across the whole country." As he spoke, at least 100 young people from many states were moving around the room, distributing sign-up sheets. Moses said, "Now we're gonna ask you to do some work." The tables came alive with conversation.

Something had shifted over the long weekend. Now the past was very much present, and a future of some kind was beginning again. The tribe of SNCC was still gathered, their spirits high, but the children were leading now, and the work of the future was beginning again.

TOM HAYDEN

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*Tom Hayden, according to SNCC's original communications director, Julian Bond, was "the first person to write about SNCC," in 1960. Hayden teaches the sociology of social movements at Scripps College. His most recent book is* The Long Sixties: From 1960 to Barack Obama *(Paradigm).*

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Who's inflammatory—tea partyers or the critics calling out their signs and slogans? Ari Melber goes on *The Joy Behar Show* to argue that it's the tea partyers who are extreme, in **The Uninformed Leading the Angry**.

This week on **The Breakdown**, Christopher Hayes asks Ken Ward Jr., a reporter for the *Charleston Gazette*, **Could the Massey Mine Disaster Have Been Prevented?**

An eight-month investigation into the assassination of Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto has brought the world no closer to knowing what forces were to blame for her death, writes Barbara Crossette in **Benazir Bhutto's Death Still Unresolved**.

Five Blackwater officials have been indicted on federal weapons violations. Given the company's track record, these charges are small change, writes Jeremy Scahill in **Blackwater Officials Indicted for Weapons Violations**.

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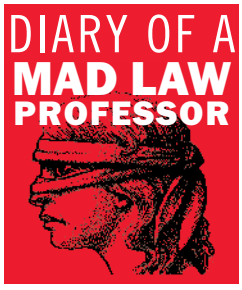
# Patricia J. Williams

## Not-Black by Default

Last week, Melissa Harris-Lacewell wrote an insightful column, "Black by Choice," about President Obama's having checked the box marked "Black, African American or Negro" on his Census form. As she notes, despite the way his complex heritage both disrupts "standard definitions of blackness" and creates "a definitional crisis for whiteness," in American culture "having a white parent has never meant becoming white" if one also has an African-descended parent.

When I read her piece, I was in a Columbia University faculty lounge, half listening to interesting people grumble interestingly about being asked to fill out another kind of census: the voluntary questionnaire, including self-identification of race and ethnicity, requested by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. This accounting, which gathers a broad spectrum of information about colleges and universities, is compiled by the Department of Education. The results are public record—the most ubiquitous reference to them being the profiles one finds in the myriad guides for prospective students. The racial part of the inquiry also grows out of the monitoring of federal grants: schools that are entirely segregated by race raise concerns about eligibility for federal funds. In other words, it is a questionnaire framed by the need to remediate historical separation, inequity and stigma.




What piqued my attention to these half-heard conversations was their inverse relation to the phenomenon of Obama's "choice." Everyone but me in the lounge was white, or would pass as such. But not one of them wanted to choose "white" as their identity. They were putting down descriptors like "mutt" or "human-colored" or "neutral" or "sallow." They were completely squeamish about describing themselves in racial or ethnic terms, and I was curious enough about the varied reasons for that resistance to join in the conversation.

For one person, it was a matter of science: "Race has no biological basis!" To him, it seemed race was *all* about bad biology; the power of it as a demographic and social force seemed entirely "imaginary." Another colleague described herself as Jewish: "I could never see myself as just white." When I asked her why she didn't just write in "Jewish," she acknowledged a deep ambivalence about putting that on any official form. She's the child of Holocaust survivors, and although she said she doesn't distrust the US government or think that this form—used to patrol against discrimination—bears any resemblance to a yellow star, she admitted that she remains hesitant and torn. Yet another colleague objected to the question of race being asked under any circumstances, even acknowledging its power as a social construction: "I'm colorblind," he insisted. "Buff-beige is a color," I pointed out, referring to what he'd written in the box. "We're never going to get past all this, unless we resist the usual categories," he said.

I understand the desire to unsettle habitual categories, but I can't help thinking how much less leeway there is for African-Americans to "take a pass": most people who appear phenotypically "black" enjoy neither the privilege nor the inclination to play around on a government form designed to track and remediate generations of prejudice. To be visibly black in this culture is to feel race every day—one can't forget it entirely when walking down the street. You're fingered, inescapably tagged—boxed in not by the form but by collective presumptions and cultural prejudgments—about beauty, criminality, intelligence, manners, articulateness, merit, health and contagion. That's the larger meaning of a social construction, after all: it has walls.

And so, while I understand the specific hesitations of my friends, I wonder if there's not a larger force at work. Reading media reports of national controversies about collecting Census data, I'm struck by how often it is white people who seem to struggle most with identifying themselves in any way that is coherent or useful to demographers. On one end, there are liberals who make much of not wanting to be "confined" by race: *Moi?* A political category? Pass. On the other end, some right-leaning whites seem convinced that unless they report that they're some kind of minority—usually dragging some poor, imagined Native American out of the closet—they'll miss out on putative "government handouts." Even those on the extreme right who are deeply committed to "white pride" seem to eschew putting that on the Census, urging fellow travelers to write in "Confederate American."

Sociologists Jennifer Lee and Frank Bean, in their excellent paper "Reinventing the Color Line: Immigration and America's New Racial/Ethnic Divide," have written about how Asian and Latino immigrants are crafting their racial identity over time. They observe that earlier groups of European immigrants who were once stigmatized as "non-white"—like Irish or Italians or Jews—over time assimilated into "whiteness." Lee and Bean point out that newer migrants from Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean are also assimilating into the dominant identity group but in ways that are shifting the racial paradigm from "white/non-white" to "black/non-black."

American identity has always been a composite creation, produced by multiple generations of miscegenation, so that any origin myth is repeatedly shattered and reconstructed in diasporic waves. But in the context of public counts like the Census or the Department of Education's survey, a new "innocence" of self-identification seems to be pushing us toward an official narrative that is less empirical than epic, where our neighborhoods and institutions are awash with Indo-European nomads, Apache warriors and "neutral," "putty-faced" "mongrels." But this dreamy world of exotically configured ethnics, so assimilative and accommodating, so playfully shape-shifting—is nonetheless premised on that still-unyielding categorical divide: "not black." ■

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# Eric Alterman

## Bill Moyers Retires

Nearly twenty years ago, I spoke to Edward R. Murrow's top producer, Fred Friendly, who told me he thought of Bill Moyers as "the Murrow of our time…the broadcaster who most upholds his mantle." But while Murrow remains television journalism's most admired historical figure, it's all but inarguable that Moyers long ago surpassed his achievements.

This is no knock on Murrow, who, after all, spent most of his career on radio. His *See It Now*—the program that helped take down Joe McCarthy in 1954—enjoyed just four years of life in a regular prime-time slot before it gradually disappeared as an occasional series, unable to find a sponsor. Defenestrated at CBS, Murrow gave up on network news entirely and accepted John Kennedy's offer to head up the USIA in 1961. But when Bill Moyers likewise found his brand of journalism unwelcome on network news, he had another option. He was able to return to PBS, where he had begun his career as a broadcaster fifteen years earlier. With his decision to found his own production company, Public Affairs Television (PAT), together with his wife and executive producer, Judith Davidson Moyers, he assured himself complete editorial independence, and in the quarter-century that followed, he fashioned a body of work without parallel in the medium's brief history.

Who but Bill Moyers could have devoted so much time to the work of Joseph Campbell and Robert Bly; done television's most hard-hitting reporting on the Iran/Contra scandal; investigated the media's failure in Iraq; defined the human impact of economic inequality; examined the ability of corporations to manipulate the "public mind"; evaluated the real-world impact on local communities of corporate-driven "free trade" agreements; devoted hours and hours of TV to a poetry festival, to the Book of Genesis, to the sources of addiction and to the relationship between the environment and religion, etc.? The variety of topics, moreover, is only half the story. Moyers's methods were unique. Where else but on a Bill Moyers program were Nobel laureates and laid-off steelworkers invited to speak at length to America, without interruption or condescension?

Bill and I have been friends—and frequent professional collaborators—for nearly two decades. But we first met in Managua in 1987, where he and his crew were talking to protesters outside the US Embassy for his landmark PBS special on *The Secret Government: The Constitution in Crisis*. Not long afterward, I spent months speaking to his co-workers at CBS and elsewhere for a magazine profile of him. All were eager to talk, as we were in the midst of one of many brief "Draft Moyers for President" movements, though a few were conflicted. Some felt abandoned by his decision to leave CBS and quit fighting the good fight for network news; but most remained grateful for the opportunities his work had offered them. Onetime *CBS Morning News* producer Jon Katz told me, "When you work with Bill, it ruins you for everyone else." Yes, Moyers would "drive the executives berserk with his agonizing over everything, and getting him on the morning news was like a three-month Kabuki dance every time. But the end result was the most brilliant stuff we ever had."

If I were forced to name a single broadcast emblematic of what Bill Moyers brought to our national conversation—and what we stand to lose with his April 30 retirement from regular broadcasting—it would be his amazing 1986 CBS documentary *The Vanishing Family: Crisis in Black America*. Taking on so sensitive a topic—one that had remained taboo in public discussion since the furious leftist attacks on the now infamous 1965 Moynihan Report had traumatized Pat Moynihan and nearly destroyed his career—Moyers waded into waters no one else wished to enter. Confronting a problem that had metastasized after two decades of liberal silence in the face of a relentless right-wing war on the poor, Moyers walked into the ghetto to give its residents the chance to speak for themselves.

The program was remarkable in what it did *not* contain. It had no "responsible" black political voices explaining away the problem of fatherless children, no white liberals offering excuses, no conservative condemnation and no experts framing the issue with sociological theory. It was just one struggling teenage single mom after another, along with more than a few absent fathers, trying to explain how they coped and why they had made the choices they had. In an age before cable, the Internet or much talk-radio, its impact was explosive, comparable, perhaps, to Murrow's famous 1960 "Harvest of Shame" report on migrant farmworkers. (Ironically, both men did their best work at the network with one foot out the door.) Like Murrow, Moyers deployed television's unmatched power to focus attention on the voiceless, forcing Americans to confront the humanity of those who are usually demonized or ignored. As even a conservative *New York Times* reviewer noted at the time, the program's "intelligence and grace…redeems television journalism."

In choosing PBS over CBS, Moyers opted for independence over influence. This freedom has allowed him to earn a deserved reputation for being the last unapologetic liberal anywhere in broadcast television. But his most significant legacy is that, also like Murrow, he treated his audience as adult citizens of a republic, who bear collective responsibility for the society we share. The notion that television can both entertain and educate—even to the point where it challenges our most powerful ideas and institutions—was crucial to the medium's founders. Yet it has all but disappeared in our current political culture, together with the democratic self-confidence necessary to sustain it. For the better part of forty years, Moyers and his co-workers have demonstrated, time and again, just what such self-confidence looks like. In doing so, they've shown the rest of us how rare and valuable this resource has become. ■

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# Naomi Klein

## A New Climate Movement in Bolivia

*Cochabamba, Bolivia*

It was 11 AM and Evo Morales had turned a football stadium into a giant classroom, marshaling an array of props: paper plates, plastic cups, disposable raincoats, handcrafted gourds, wooden plates and multicolored ponchos. All came into play to make his main point: to fight climate change, "we need to recover the values of the indigenous people."

Yet wealthy countries have little interest in learning these lessons and are instead pushing through a plan that at its best would raise average global temperatures 2 degrees Celsius. "That would mean the melting of the Andean and Himalayan glaciers," Morales told the thousands gathered in the stadium, part of the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth. What he didn't have to say is that the Bolivian people, no matter how sustainably they choose to live, have no power to save their glaciers.

Bolivia's climate summit has had moments of joy, levity and absurdity. Yet underneath it all, you can feel the emotion that provoked this gathering: rage against helplessness.

It's little wonder. Bolivia is in the midst of a dramatic political transformation, one that has nationalized key industries and elevated the voices of indigenous peoples as never before. But when it comes to Bolivia's most pressing, existential crisis—the fact that its glaciers are melting at an alarming rate, threatening the water supply in two major cities—Bolivians are powerless to do anything to change their fate on their own.

That's because the actions causing the melting are taking place not in Bolivia but on the highways and in the industrial zones of heavily industrialized countries. In Copenhagen, leaders of endangered nations like Bolivia and Tuvalu argued passionately for the kind of deep emissions cuts that could avert catastrophe. They were politely told that the political will in the North just wasn't there. More than that, the United States made clear that it didn't need small countries like Bolivia to be part of a climate solution. It would negotiate a deal with other heavy emitters behind closed doors, and the rest of the world would be informed of the results and invited to sign on, which is precisely what happened with the Copenhagen Accord. When Bolivia and Ecuador refused to rubber-stamp the accord, the US government cut their climate aid by $3 million and $2.5 million, respectively. "It's not a free-rider process," explained US climate negotiator Jonathan Pershing. (Anyone wondering why activists from the global South reject the idea of "climate aid" and are instead demanding repayment of "climate debts" has their answer here.) Pershing's message was chilling: if you are poor, you don't have the right to prioritize your own survival.

When Morales invited "social movements and Mother Earth's defenders…scientists, academics, lawyers and governments" to come to Cochabamba for a new kind of climate summit, it was a revolt against this experience of helplessness, an attempt to build a base of power behind the right to survive.

The Bolivian government got the ball rolling by proposing four big ideas: that nature should be granted rights that protect ecosystems from annihilation (a "Universal Declaration of Mother Earth Rights"); that those who violate those rights and other international environmental agreements should face legal consequences (a "Climate Justice Tribunal"); that poor countries should receive various forms of compensation for a crisis they are facing but had little role in creating ("Climate Debt"); and that there should be a mechanism for people around the world to express their views on these topics ("World People's Referendum on Climate Change").

The next stage was to invite global civil society to hash out the details. Seventeen working groups were struck, and after weeks of online discussion, they met for a week in Cochabamba with the goal of presenting their final recommendations at the summit's end. The process is fascinating but far from perfect (for instance, as Jim Shultz of the Democracy Center pointed out, the working group on the referendum apparently spent more time arguing about adding a question on abolishing capitalism than on discussing how in the world you run a global referendum). Yet Bolivia's enthusiastic commitment to participatory democracy may well prove the summit's most important contribution.

That's because, after the Copenhagen debacle, an exceedingly dangerous talking point went viral: the real culprit of the breakdown was democracy itself. The UN process, giving equal votes to 192 countries, was simply too unwieldy—better to find the solutions in small groups. Even trusted environmental voices like James Lovelock fell prey: "I have a feeling that climate change may be an issue as severe as a war," he told the *Guardian* recently. "It may be necessary to put democracy on hold for a while." But in reality, it is such small groupings—like the invitation-only club that rammed through the Copenhagen Accord—that have caused us to lose ground, weakening already inadequate existing agreements. By contrast, the climate change policy brought to Copenhagen by Bolivia was drafted by social movements through a participatory process, and the end result was the most transformative and radical vision so far.

With the Cochabamba summit, Bolivia is trying to take what it has accomplished at the national level and globalize it, inviting the world to participate in drafting a joint climate agenda ahead of the next UN climate gathering, in Cancún. In the words of Bolivia's ambassador to the UN, Pablo Solón, "The only thing that can save mankind from a tragedy is the exercise of global democracy."

If he is right, the Bolivian process might save not just our warming planet but our failing democracies as well. Not a bad deal at all. ■

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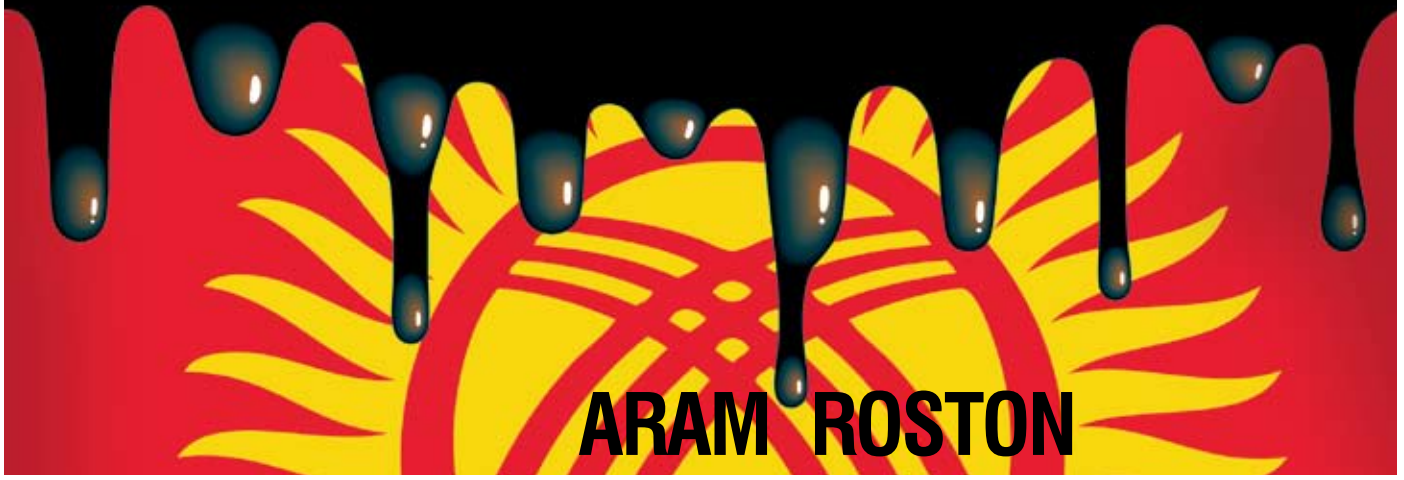
# FUELING THE AFGHAN WAR

## A TALE OF TWO COMPANIES AND A "BRIBE" FROM THE US IN KYRGYZSTAN



ARAM ROSTON

In Napoleon Bonaparte's day an army may have marched on its belly, as the French emperor famously quipped, but the modern-day American military campaign in Afghanistan needs not just food but also fuel. Diesel for the MRAPs and Humvees, aviation fuel for the planes and helicopters—that's the fodder for the military surge under way in Afghanistan. Fuel is precious there—they call it liquid gold—and the effort to keep it flowing has created an array of bizarre monopolies, strange alliances and allegations of corruption entangling the US government.

This is the story of two interlinked and secretive offshore companies run by a former Army intelligence officer. The firms run a specialized monopoly of massive proportions. Their niche: supplying aviation fuel for US military operations in Afghanistan—enough to fill two Olympic-size swimming pools each and every day of the year.

The companies' names are Red Star Enterprises and Mina Corp. In Afghanistan, Red Star Enterprises has a sole source contract worth more than $1 billion, won without competition, to deliver fuel to Bagram Air Base, that central hub of the war effort. *The Nation* has obtained an unusual "memorandum of agreement" between Red Star and the US military authorities, giving the firm exclusive ownership of a fuel pipeline that feeds directly into the base.

Similarly, in nearby Kyrgyzstan, a staging ground for the Afghan war, Mina has another sole source contract, awarded without any announcement, to provide fuel to a huge and controversial base. The contract has been at the center of corruption and kickback allegations, and the companies have been accused of enriching the families of two successive heads of state, both of whom presided over kleptocratic and repressive regimes—an arrangement that fostered great resentment in the country. Violence exploded on the streets in early April, leaving eighty protesters dead, and President Kurmanbek Bakiyev was forced to flee. The new, provisional government sees Red Star and Mina in a very specific light. The chief of staff, Edil Baisalov, tells *The Nation* that the firms have served as "an indirect way for the Pentagon to bribe the ruling families of Kyrgyzstan."

It is a serious allegation but not a new one or as outlandish as it may seem, although the companies deny it. The eight-year saga of high-stakes contracts and secretive deals raises serious questions about how the Afghan campaign has been run, not only by the Bush administration but also under President Barack Obama. Sole source contracts have continued under the current administration, and if the Kyrgyz authorities are correct, the Pentagon contractors are still doing what they did under Bush. After all, the thirst for oil and fuel can only grow as President Obama's Afghan surge ramps up.

The man in charge of Red Star's and Mina's operations is a good-natured retired Army lieutenant colonel named Chuck Squires, now 56 years old. A lanky and broad-shouldered fellow with a good sense of humor, he has a graduate degree in Russian studies from Harvard. Before 9/11, he was the defense attaché at the US Embassy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Back then, when he was still in the military, the Republic of Kyrgyzstan was just another impoverished and mountainous ex-Soviet republic, with a per capita income a little higher than that of Cambodia. It was just one pawn in the Great Game between Russia and the United States, and it was not easily accessible, bordered by Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan on the south, west and north, respectively, and by China on the east. Nor was it strategically important, although its huge inland lake did serve as a testing site for advanced Russian torpedoes.

Squires, who did not respond to requests for comment for this article, had left Bishkek by September 11, 2001. One source says he was gone from the military by then too, but his experience there would serve him well in the private sector in the future.

That is because shortly after 9/11, Kyrgyzstan agreed to host a US air base. At the time, Kyrgyzstan's president was Askar Akayev, who presented himself as an innovative reformer and

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economist. The United States did not pay much for the base rights, although this was a source of controversy within the country and a matter of concern for the State Department. At the time, Donald Rumsfeld's Pentagon was holding sway over Colin Powell's State Department. The Defense Department insisted it was in charge of all negotiations, and the State Department's input wasn't wanted. "You stay out of it" is how a former State Department official remembers the Pentagon's tone.

The Manas base, dubbed the Ganci base, after a firefighter killed on 9/11, was like the FedEx hub through which the US military flies material and people to Afghanistan from around the world. The base hosts tankers and other planes, and operates as a transfer facility for troops.

Red Star Enterprises and Mina Corp. soon appeared on the scene like mysterious strangers. They had a rather ethereal, offshore quality and some intriguing connections. For example, Red Star had the same London address and phone number as *Iraq Today*, a purportedly independent and short-lived newspaper launched in the wake of the invasion of Iraq. The paper had been set up by a former journalist who worked with Mina Corp.—which, of course, was connected to Red Star.

Buying fuel was 'an indirect way for the Pentagon to bribe the ruling families of Kyrgyzstan,' said an official of the new provisional government.

Over the years neither Red Star nor Mina seems to have even bothered to put up a website. They both have offices in London, but they are both incorporated on the island of Gibraltar, a British territory off Spain with impenetrable secrecy laws for corporations. Various private investigators have been unable to determine who really owns them.

Though Red Star had no apparent track record, it was hired by the Pentagon to supply the base's massive fuel needs. Red Star's director of operations: the now retired Lieutenant Colonel Squires. Squires returned to Bishkek as a civilian, coordinating Red Star's contract work. The Pentagon's Defense Energy Support Center hired Red Star to supply its fuel. It was a huge contract, totaling $240 million over three years.

Even if the Kyrgyz government wasn't getting paid much for the base, the Akayev family was reaping tens of millions. It was heavily involved in business at the airport, running the two companies that operated as Red Star's subcontractors. One of them was run by Akayev's son, and the other by his son-in-law, and from 2002 to 2005 Red Star, operating on its US government contract, paid the firms about $120 million.

It may have just been business, but the way Kyrgyz investigators later saw it, Red Star, the prime contractor, was the cut out for funneling funds to the Akayev family.

It was all cozy until violence hit the streets of Bishkek in 2005, foreshadowing what was to come five years later. The "Tulip Revolution" forced Akayev to flee and abdicate, and then the secrets of the Akayev regime began to tumble out, in scandal after scandal. The new government, headed by President Kurmanbek Bakiyev, even asked the US government for help investigating the former regime. The FBI's Eurasian Unit churned out an extraordinary report that laid bare a "vast amount of potential criminal activities associated with the Akaev Organization." The president and his family were accused of "siphoning off at least $1 billion from the Kyrgyz state budget." It was as if the Kyrgyz government had been some kind of criminal enterprise within which the United States ran a military base.

After the revolt, people thought things might be different. The new government seemed to bring a fresh sense of integrity for a short while, before it began to stack its own skeletons in the closet. Despite his claims to be a reformer, Bakiyev appeared to go about replicating the patterns of his predecessor in a deliberate manner. "He really didn't think twice. They inherited this," says one consultant who dealt with Bakiyev shortly after the revolution. "We really in great detail uncovered the scheme. And I think the moment they figured out how it worked, they went and did it."

Peter Zalmayev of the Eurasia Democracy Initiative puts it this way: "Bakiyev came in under the premise he would clean [the government] up and make it more transparent. But he replaced the structure they had with Akayev and his son with his own family." Word quickly spread that Bakiyev's youngest son, Maksim, was in business too. The insiders said he was taking over "Manas International"—through frontmen.

Meanwhile, Bakiyev's associates were making powerful US connections. For example, one of his allies set up a bank called AsiaUniversalBank (AUB) in Bishkek. On its board were two august former US senators: former US Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole, currently associated with the lobbying firm Alston & Bird, and J. Bennett Johnston, the longtime Louisiana senator, who has his own firm. Dole was paid several hundred thousand dollars for his role, which included one trip to Bishkek and a few board meetings in Washington.

Meanwhile, what mattered to the United States was the base at Manas. There, the airfield was still lined with squadrons of KC-135 Stratotankers, which needed constant filling for their missions over the skies of Afghanistan.

Red Star kept up its work, supplying fuel.

But Red Star was also busy elsewhere at the same time. Chuck Squires and Red Star were now focused not just on Kyrgyzstan but directly on Afghanistan. To do business with the US military in Afghanistan usually means operating at Bagram Air Base, the sprawling compound—a virtual military city—about an hour north of Kabul.

Col. Jonathan Ives was then the base commander at Bagram. Red Star, he says, was synonymous with aviation fuel, trucking it down from Uzbekistan along an old and treacherous route through the mountains from Mazar-i-Sharif to Kabul, passing at one point through the Salang Pass, a 1.5-mile tunnel through a mountain. Ives says Red Star trucked in more than

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250,000 gallons of the precious stuff each day—a staggering amount. Each tanker truck can carry a maximum of 9,000 gallons, so Red Star would have had convoys of about thirty tractor-trailers per day.

In October 2007 Red Star scored a remarkable coup. Squires signed a deal with Ives that allowed Red Star to build and own a pipeline that ran from the base for all that fuel. Ives says that Red Star had purchased land near Bagram Air Base. "It was farmland, so they purchased the land and the rights." In the memorandum of agreement between Red Star and the military, obtained by *The Nation*, Red Star promises it "will install, at no cost to the United States Government (USG), a petroleum pipeline for transfer of TS-1 jet fuel." Significantly, the agreement says, "Red Star will retain ownership of the pipeline."

It is intriguing that the firm signed such a document rather than an ordinary contract. "It is very unusual—very unusual," said professor Charles Tiefer, an expert on contract law at the University of Baltimore School of Law who sits on the US government's eight-member Commission on Wartime Contracting. I asked him who would regulate such an agreement. "Nobody," he answered. "There is no regulation of it because it's not supposed to happen, because it is trying to create a loophole where there is none in the Competition in Contracting Act."

Whatever the legal basis for the contract, not only the fuel pipeline but the land underneath it was owned by Red Star. Indeed, trucks would be able to gain access to the pipeline only through Red Star property. Red Star, in other words, controlled all access to the pipeline that would bring fuel to the thirsty US air base. It was as if the company offered to build a door to a US base and then controlled anything that went through the door. "I think it is pretty clever, if you want to say that," says Ives. "It is shrewd business," he added, a bit ruefully. He says he thought the pipeline was a good idea because it limited fuel trucks' access to the base and made things safe. He didn't realize, he says, that the pipeline Red Star built would give it a monopoly.

But that's what it did. Within four months of that memorandum of agreement, the United States announced it planned to offer a sole source contract to Red Star for 194 million gallons of fuel over two years. There were some complaints by a potential competitor, but it had no access to the pipeline. That summer, in August 2008, Red Star was awarded the contract for $720 million. It had locked in the monopoly.

On March 4, 2009, barely six weeks in office, Barack Obama pledged to crack down on government procurement waste and fraud, and "to dramatically reform the way we do business on contracts across the entire government." Standing next to Senator John McCain, his adversary in the election but an advocate of contract reform as well, he said, "We need more competition for contracts and more oversight as they are carried out." That day he sent out a memo asking all federal agencies to work on a way to end sole source contracts.

But when it came to Red Star and Mina, things stayed very much the same. On July 29, about five months after the president's speech, the Defense Department did not bother issuing a solicitation or requesting bids for the fuel contract. Instead, it quietly issued a new, $243 million contract to Mina to keep selling fuel to the base at Manas. The government used an unusual clause in the federal rules to justify this: the "national security" exemption. Under that provision, "Full and open competition need not be provided for when the disclosure of the agency's needs would compromise the national security."

"It went from competitive to sole source," says lawyer Ronald Uscher, who represents a competitor to Red Star and Mina called IOTC. In 2007 Mina had actually won the contract through a process that ostensibly included competitive bidding—though it beat out IOTC, whose bid had been almost 3 percent lower. Using the Freedom of Information Act, Uscher tried to obtain information about Mina's bid, but the Defense Department refused to tell him how Mina and Red Star gauged their price changes. Normally these are based on worldwide fuel prices, but not in Kyrgyzstan. Here it would be kept a secret. "There is nothing secretive about the price of jet fuel in 99.9 percent of the world," says Uscher, "except at Manas Air Base in Kyrgyzstan, apparently!" Then, in 2009, Uscher complains, "You have a sole source secret contract to supply fuel to Manas awarded to Mina with no other competitors having oversight and no citizens having oversight."

Why the secrecy? And what was the national security requirement that dictated avoiding competition? Did Mina's source for fuel have anything to do with it?

Officials in Kyrgyzstan's provisional government say it straight out: Mina Corp., the affiliate of Red Star, was paying funds to Maksim Bakiyev, the president's son. The new government's chief of staff Baisalov says that in order to keep the air base secure and supplied with fuel, the United States essentially "bribed the Kyrgyz ruling family. First it was Akayev and then it was Bakiyev. On one hand, the White House and the US State Department, they announce these noble goals, democracy, good government, and on the other hand, the military comes in and overrides everyone else." The Defense Logistics Agency, which oversees the Defense Energy Support Center, wouldn't comment specifically on that, even to deny it. "We can't speak to that," said DLA spokesman Dennis Gauci. "You'll have to speak to Mina Corp."

A representative of Mina, who asked not to be named, denied any wrongdoing. "There was no consideration given to the ownership interests of any supplier." If Maksim Bakiyev did have any ownership interest, he said, Mina didn't know about it. The company, he told me, was reaching out to the interim Kyrgyz government to try to explain it to them. (Mina emphasizes it does vital work "by providing mission-critical fuel supplies to the troops and civilians that are carrying out the mission in Afghanistan.")

With the collapse of the Bakiyev regime, a whole web of money and power has been exposed. That bank, AUB, on whose board sat ex-Senators Dole and Johnston? Its accounts have been frozen, and the new government says it was laundering money.

The provisional government in Kyrgyzstan says it will leave the base open for now. And the United States, with the Afghan surge under way, needs that base now more than ever. But the Kyrgyz government is making a new demand: it is launching a criminal investigation of the Bakiyev regime and its profits—and it wants the US government to help. ■

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# Kyrgyzstan's Islamist Blowback

American support for repressive governments has provided fertile ground for recruitment.

**by DAVID TRILLING**

*Bishkek*

When he was arrested again two years ago, Ravshan Gapirov was not surprised. A popular defense lawyer for Muslims charged with extremism, Gapirov had long angered authorities in Kyrgyzstan who see Islam as one of the greatest dangers to the country's stability. He spent most of 2008 in prison, accused of supporting a banned pan-Islamist group, Hizb ut-Tahrir, and collaborating with his extremist clients.

Gapirov, director of the Justice and Truth Human Rights Advocacy Center in the southern town of Osh, struggles against a confounding system: because of Central Asia's strategic proximity to Afghanistan, the United States and Russia have supported dictatorships that, by banning even peaceful expressions of Islam, have pushed ordinary disaffected Muslims into the arms of radicals, some based in Afghanistan.

On April 7, after his security forces fired into a mob, leaving more than eighty dead, President Kurmanbek Bakiyev fled the capital, Bishkek. For the five years of his increasingly corrupt reign, he had attacked Islam as both a security and political threat. But he also hosted a US air base at the Manas airport outside Bishkek, established shortly after 9/11, and thus had an unflinching ally in his campaign, one that was willing to put aside its democratic ideals for a short-term strategic gain.

In Bakiyev's sudden and unexpected absence, former opposition leaders from disparate parties announced an interim government and slowly took control. But many of those leaders are tainted with scandal, having previously served with Bakiyev before leaving to form their own personality-driven opposition parties. The acting chair, Roza Otunbayeva, is loved in the West for her grandmotherly demeanor and fluent English, but she is suspected at home of being ineffectual. Other interim ministers are split on where their allegiances lie: with Russia, the former colonial master and driver of Central Asian economies, angry over the presence of American troops in its "near abroad"; or the United States, which most Kyrgyz see as primarily interested in keeping its air base.

Washington was quiet as Bakiyev murdered opponents, shut down media outlets, rigged elections and drove even moderate Muslims, afraid they would be targeted as terrorists, to practice their religion in secret. In private conversations, US officials acknowledged Bakiyev's appalling human rights record, but publicly they offered only tepid criticism and continued training his elite military units. Like other Central Asian despots, Bakiyev received lucrative American rewards for highlighting, or even exaggerating, the threat of terrorism.

US Ambassador Tatiana Gfoeller underscored this support in October, at the opening of a Kyrgyz special forces complex in Tokmok, where she said, "Brand-new, modern military equipment—trucks, tactical gear, ambulances, night sights, body armor and much more—are arriving in Kyrgyzstan daily and being distributed to Kyrgyzstan's armed forces."

Central Asia is a region of varied religious traditions. Islam took root late among the Kyrgyz nomads and fused with local animist and mystic beliefs. But devotion to conservative forms is growing in the Ferghana Valley, a fertile basin of twisting, arbitrary and contested borders and overlapping ethnic groups: Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan wrap around one another in puzzle pieces fashioned by Joseph Stalin in the 1920s. The Kyrgyz portion of the valley is home to a large, alienated Uzbek minority. In the 1990s hundreds died in ethnic conflicts. Tensions endure.

Judging by the crowded mosques on Fridays and the number of women wearing hijabs on the streets, the valley is more observant than elsewhere in Central Asia. But locals here, like elsewhere, are still more likely to enjoy their vodka than their prayer, or see no problem indulging in both. Nevertheless, Central Asian governments are paranoid, full of atheist apparatchiks trained in the Communist Soviet Union. Only the Islam espoused by a network of state-appointed mullahs is tolerated.

From Bakiyev's perspective, "all Muslims are extremists," said Kara-Suu Imam Rashad Kamalov, whose father was gunned down in 2006 in an attack human rights observers attribute to the state security services. Because of the oppression, "more Kyrgyz are devoted to the religion and practice Islam," he told me. But tyranny will not work forever, he added. "After someone has experienced fear once, the fear disappears."

Already there is a precedent for radicalism and violence in the Ferghana Valley: the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, bent on destroying the corrupt, despotic regime of Uzbek President Islam Karimov. Karimov's fierce crackdown in the 1990s drove the militant group, which grew out of a political movement, to Afghanistan and an alliance with Al Qaeda. IMU members fought alongside militants during the US invasion in 2001. The IMU's core membership is thought to be hiding in the tribal areas of Pakistan, waiting and plotting a return to Central Asia and their traditional base in the Uzbek portion of the Ferghana Valley. Some are probably hiding in Kyrgyzstan.

Pointing to the IMU, Bakiyev repeatedly said Kyrgyzstan faces a growing threat from international terror. With insecurity spreading into the previously quiet northern Afghan provinces, attacks throughout the Ferghana Valley have been on the rise, such as an assault in May 2009 on a police station in Khanabad, Uzbekistan, on the Uzbek-Kyrgyz frontier, and an alleged suicide bombing in nearby Andijan the following day.

Heightening the fear, the compliant Kyrgyz press eagerly

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reports the arrest of alleged activists, often those associated with Hizb ut-Tahrir (Party of Liberation), a transnational group that seeks to establish a caliphate. While the movement forswears violence and has never been implicated in any violence, it is banned not only in Kyrgyzstan but throughout Central Asia, forcing members to practice underground. Observers such as Osh native Alisher Khamidov, a doctoral student at Johns Hopkins, fear that, hidden from view, Hizb ut-Tahrir could prepare people to join violent groups if it is unable to offer a political solution. There are no accurate figures on membership, but informed estimates say it is 8,000 in Kyrgyzstan alone.

"If the state repression of religion continues at this pace and there are not political channels for representing Muslim grievances, we are likely to witness radicalization," Khamidov said, adding, "the Kyrgyz government is definitely exaggerating the threat of radical Islam."

The town of Kara-Suu is a natural hub for Hizb ut-Tahrir. Home to one of Central Asia's largest bazaars, it is divided by the Uzbek-Kyrgyz border. Crossing it is difficult, even for ethnic Uzbek families separated by the border, and business is hurting. Moreover, little political opposition remains to offer ideological variety.

DAVID TRILLING
A worshiper at Osh's Imam Al-Bukhari Mosque

"They mention Hizb ut-Tahrir on television every day," a Hizb ut-Tahrir recruiter told me a few weeks before Bakiyev's overthrow. "One of our tasks is promotion, and this is a natural advertisement for us." He was hiding in the back of a station wagon with tinted windows, sandwiched between stacks of shipping containers in the Kara-Suu bazaar. "Our ideology is spreading, and people are becoming more energetic because Bakiyev has moved away from the principles of democracy. It's a victory for us; we benefit from this."

While Hizb ut-Tahrir does not have an anti-Western agenda, he said, Western support for repressive governments in the region is boosting anti-Americanism and providing fertile ground for recruitment.

"They say they are building a democratic country, but at the same time they are violating the principles of democracy: freedom of belief, freedom of the press," said a Hizb ut-Tahrir member in Osh in March. "If they find a book they don't like in your house, they take you to jail. What kind of freedom is this?"

"We don't have machine guns; we have only ideas," said the Kara-Suu recruiter, explaining the group's methods and comparing Central Asia to czarist Russia in the years before the Bolsheviks seized power. "Who is in prison? Those who have been prosecuted and arrested by the government. And of course these people support us. Many revolutions started in prisons."

In October 2008 residents of Nookat organized the Eid al-Fitr festival marking the end of Ramadan, a holiday widely celebrated throughout Kyrgyzstan with the slaughter of sheep—and often a lot of vodka. Villagers say the mayor's office gave permission to celebrate in the town's stadium. Instead, town officials prohibited the celebration and dispersed the crowd. A protest followed in which villagers allegedly threw rocks, breaking windows in a government office. Thirty-two were convicted of inciting unrest and fomenting religious enmity. Sentences ranged up to twenty years.

"The authorities interfered in the process of investigation and in the courts. There was no evidence against the convicted. Witnesses were mostly people from law enforcement bodies. It was obvious that they were ordered" to testify, said an Osh-based lawyer who has represented defendants in extremism trials, including the one in Nookat.

Several unexplained killings in Uzgen and Jalalabad last summer further rattled Muslim communities and tested the state's credibility. Authorities say they liquidated terrorists infiltrating from Uzbekistan—perpetrators of a suicide bombing by an IMU splinter group in Andijan—yet provided little proof. Human rights activists allege the security services tortured and killed innocent farmers in a botched raid and elaborate cover-up. That several foreign human rights activists investigating the events in Nookat were expelled from Kyrgyzstan in 2009 further undermined faith in the authorities' version of events.

Yet while these abuses continued, the United States maintained its support for Bakiyev, calling him a partner in the "war on terror." Earlier this year Washington announced it would build a $5.5 million anti-terrorism training center in the Ferghana Valley. Activists saw a connection between the US aid and Bakiyev's mounting crackdown. "The authorities don't care about their citizens' rights, about absolutely innocent people," said the Nookat defense lawyer, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals. The crackdown is "to show that we have a problem with religious extremism and terrorism, because a lot of money is being allocated for that.… The money is being given to the Kyrgyz government by the United States and by the Russians."

Moscow and Washington, both concerned about Islamic terrorism, look the other way while repression continues apace in Central Asia. Moscow is also vying to build an anti-terror training center in the Ferghana Valley, and in this competition for strategic influence, the two are willing to overlook odious behavior. For the United States, that could be a mistake, warns a March report by the conservative Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. It argues that the Central Asian governments' overreaction is promoting radicalization, because "ongoing state-sponsored violence has almost certainly claimed more lives, and surely maimed more fates, than the sporadic actions of a handful of terrorists." The report cautions that

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US interests in the region, such as the base at Manas and overland transportation networks used to supply American troops in Afghanistan, make tempting targets.

Since the violent uprising of April 7, that message has gone unheeded. Washington appears most concerned about keeping the base open, worriedly courting Kyrgyzstan's interim government of bickering former officials and apparatchiks. Many of these figures led the so-called Tulip Revolution of 2005. Now they are struggling to define their legitimacy. Some are angry with the United States for not speaking out against Bakiyev's human rights abuses and have openly said Manas must be closed. It's too early to tell how they will approach human rights, but already power struggles are apparent, and friends have told me they fear the recent upheaval just delivered more of the same, as the new leaders are all recycled from past governments.

Bloodshed is on many people's minds these days—not just the kind Bakiyev left on the streets of Bishkek as he fled. "The authorities don't know what they want to achieve. But in my opinion, it will lead to a very bloody revolution if it goes on like this. I am convinced that such a revolution is inevitable," Gapirov, the human rights lawyer, told me a few weeks before Bakiyev's downfall. When it comes to human rights and Islam, in a country known for its spontaneous uprisings, the new government and its foreign backers would be wise to listen. ■

# The Hebrew Republic

**by KAI BIRD**

My father was a Foreign Service officer, a diplomat and an Arabist who spent virtually all his career in the Near East, as it was called in the State Department. So I spent most of my childhood among the Israelis and the Arabs of Palestine, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. In the spring of 1956, when I was 4, Father was appointed vice consul at the American consulate in the Jordanian-controlled part of Jerusalem. Mother arrived a few weeks later, bringing my little sister and me. We soon settled into a rented house, newly built of the city's famous gleaming white limestone, on a hill overlooking the stretch of "no man's land" that bordered Israeli-controlled Mount Scopus.

Jerusalem was very much a divided city. A jarring series of ad hoc fences, walls and bales of barbed wire, running like an angry, jagged scar from north to south, separated East Jerusalem from West. Our house was a stone's throw from the 1949 armistice line, and Mount Scopus was but an island of Jewish property in a sea of Arab territory. On some nights I could hear the random, not-so-distant tapping of machine-gun fire. "War and rumors of war seem to be the habit around here," my father wrote, "and waking up in the night to hear rifle fire is almost an every night occurrence."

To get to West Jerusalem one had to cross no man's land, passing through the heavily guarded passageway known as Mandelbaum Gate. The gate took its name from a house that once stood on the spot, built by a family of Jewish immigrants from Byelorussia. I crossed through the gate nearly every day, past the barbed wire and the cone-shaped anti-tank barriers.

JOHN CHILLINGWORTH/PICTURE POST/GETTY IMAGES

Jerusalem's Mandelbaum Gate in 1956

Men with guns stood guard. The skeletal remains of armored personnel carriers and rusting tanks lay about as constant reminders of lost lives and past conflicts.

I know the dangers and the seductions of the Middle East. It is part of my identity. I grew up among a people who routinely referred to the creation of the State of Israel as the Nakba—the catastrophe. And yet I fell in love with and married a Jewish American woman, the only daughter of two Holocaust survivors, both Jewish Austrians. Gradually, over many years of marriage, I came to understand what this meant. One can't live with a child of Holocaust survivors without absorbing some of the same sensibilities that her parents transmitted to her as a young girl. It is an unspoken dread, a sense of fragility, an anxious anticipation of unseen horrors. So the Holocaust—or, to use the more accurately descriptive Hebrew term, the Shoah—well, it too has become a part of my identity. The Nakba and the Shoah: the bookends of my life.

Although I went to college in the United States—Carleton in Northfield, Minnesota—I returned to the Middle East for a year in 1970–71 to study at the American University of Beirut. I went back again in my 20s as a freelance reporter, and I had many adventures before securing, in 1978, a tenuous part-time position as the assistant editor of *The Nation*. Three months later Victor Navasky suddenly became my new boss. Victor quickly became my journalistic mentor, teaching me the craft of writing editorials and how to inspire young freelancers to rewrite their wooden prose for the third or fourth time—all for a payment in

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"the high two figures." I called Victor my "rabbi"—a term Wall Street lawyers still use to describe the wizened partners who take young associates under their wing.

In December 1981 Victor and I edited a special issue of *The Nation* titled "Myths About the Middle East." Nearly three decades later, I would be guilty of false modesty if I didn't claim a certain prescience in what we wrote. The editorial introducing this special issue could be published today without the change of a single word. We argued that the "greater threat" to Israel's security was not Palestinian terrorists but the danger from within: "Israel's democratic character—and its legitimacy and distinctiveness as a Middle Eastern state—is placed in increasing jeopardy with the passage of each day of military subjugation for 1.2 million Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza. The more 'successful' Israel is in introducing a large settler population into the occupied territories, the closer it is to becoming a total garrison state."

We then observed, "Among the misconceptions obscuring the road out of the present impasse are those having to do with the nature of contemporary Zionism.… Did Zionism mean a homeland for all Jews? Was this homeland for Jews and no other people?" We answered by arguing that "after the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, it gradually became clear that messianic Zionism—with its assertion that all Jews are one nation, that the ingathering of the Diaspora is the raison d'être of Israel—was an outmoded or unrealizable idea." Obviously, most Jews around the world, including most American Jews, were not coming. Our editorial argued that Israel should define its citizens as Israelis—not Jews—and that therefore it made no sense to offer automatic citizenship to any Jew anywhere. (We suggested, however, that perhaps the Law of Return should remain applicable until the Holocaust generation had died out.)

In conclusion, we pointed out, "political Zionism succeeded in creating a state called Israel, a Hebrew nation in a part of historical Palestine." We cited Uri Avnery, the Israeli writer and peace activist who had proclaimed some years earlier that Zionism was dead. We also drew on the ideas of Hillel Kook (1915–2001), a former envoy of the Irgun, a Zionist paramilitary organization, who did more than anyone to rescue European Jews from the Shoah. I met Kook in Israel in 1978 and became captivated by his arguments for a secular understanding of Israeli identity—a national identity based on Hebrew language and culture, and not merely religion. In this "post-Zionist era" the conflict was not one between Arab and Jew but between Arab Palestinians and Hebrew Palestinians. Kook's important distinction, we argued, paved the way for a two-state solution, based on territorial compromise between the Hebrew-speaking and Arabic-speaking Palestinians.

The problem—then and now—with this formulation is that messianic Zionism did not die with the establishment of the State of Israel. Unfortunately, messianic Zionism continues to thrive in the hearts of a sizable minority of Israelis—just as political Islam, under the banner of Hamas, has gained increasing support among Palestinians. And even the majority of Israelis still find it unthinkable to repudiate the notion that Israel is a "Jewish" state rather than a Hebrew-speaking secular state in which Jewish culture and religion are merely components of Israel's national identity.

"Messianic Zionism's claim of a Jewish right to Eretz Israel, the biblical Holy Land," we wrote in *The Nation* in 1981, "impels modern Israelis to conclude, as did an early Zionist, Dr. Arthur Ruppin, in 1936, 'It is our destiny to be in a state of continual warfare with the Arabs.'" Messianic Zionism cannot afford to compromise, precisely because it claims to speak for all Jews, everywhere, and not just the Hebrews of Israel. The editorial quoted Golda Meir telling a group of battle-hardened soldiers on the Golan Heights in the midst of the 1973 October War, "If all the blood that was shed in keeping Israel alive was only for the 3 million [Israelis] of today, it is not worthwhile."

Such a sentiment is an obfuscation of reality. Meir's messianic Zionism would have Hebrew-speaking Israelis fight and die on behalf of a non-Hebrew-speaking Jewish Diaspora that has no intention of ever making *aliyah*—immigrating (literally, "ascending") to Israel. This makes no sense, and furthermore, it belittles the interests of those Hebrew-speaking Israelis who are trying to make a life for themselves and their families in a country constantly at war. (In 1947 Rabbi Judah Magnes, then president of Jerusalem's Hebrew University, said, "If I do not want a Jewish state, it is because I do not want perpetual war with the Arabs.")

If Israel had been at peace these past six decades, perhaps messianic Zionism would have naturally withered away. But there is no peace, and the ongoing conflict continually reinforces tribalism, religiosity and messianic sentiments. Paradoxically, Israel is being torn in two radically different directions. As the Israeli-American historian Bernard Avishai observes, "We are now in a society that is more democratic, more liberal, more secular, more Israeli—but yet, ironically, more Israeli Jewish." What he means by "Israeli Jewish" is "a Jewish culture that is more overtly *halakhic*"—that is, a society governed by rabbinical courts and religious ritual.

About 76 percent of Israel's population—or 5.4 million people—define themselves as Jewish. But while most Israelis are still culturally secular, some 1.5 million others are divided into two main streams: the nationalist religious and the ultra-Orthodox, or *haredim*. And because of their high birthrates, the Orthodox community as a whole is growing rapidly. By definition, the Orthodox are antisecular, and over the years they have succeeded in imposing many of their archaic rules on the secular majority. They determine who is a Jew and who is not, and sometimes what is culturally forbidden. They have the political muscle to persuade the state to fund their religious schools. The ultra-Orthodox, primarily concerned with pursuing religious studies, get their young men and women exempted from military service. The national religious, for their part, form the backbone of the settlers' movement to colonize the occupied territories, and they have moved in great numbers into the army, transforming that formerly overwhelmingly secular institution. Both the nationalist religious and the ultra-Orthodox ardently believe in their right to live in an exclusively Jewish state—which helps to explain why in some polls a near-majority of Israelis say they would like to see their government "support the emigration

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of Arab citizens." A small majority openly opposes equal rights for Israeli Palestinians.

This is, to say the least, a highly undemocratic sentiment. But it has become quite clear that the Orthodox cherish "state Judaism" over democracy. Even the Hebrew spoken by the Orthodox, saturated as it is with archaic religious concepts and overtones, seems to reinforce tribalism. For the Orthodox, all politics comes down to one question: is it good for the Jews? As Avishai observes in his deeply incisive book *The Hebrew Republic*: "You cannot live in Hebrew and expect no repercussions from its archaic power. You cannot live in a state with an official Judaism, in addition to this Hebrew, and expect no erosion of citizenship. You can, as most Israelis do, speak the language, ignore the archaism, and tolerate the Judaism. But then you should not expect your children to understand what democracy is."

I am under no illusion that Avishai's—and the late Hillel Kook's—argument for a "Hebrew Republic" will soon persuade the American public, let alone most Israelis. But the vision for a peaceful resolution to the conflict has been put forth by both Israeli and Palestinian leaders. My childhood neighbor Sari Nusseibeh, now the president of Al-Quds University in Jerusalem, and Ami Ayalon, a former head of Israel's internal intelligence agency, the Shin Bet, co-signed in 2002 a simple one-page outline for a two-state solution that they have couched as a citizens' initiative. It has now collected a quarter-million Israeli and just slightly fewer Palestinian signatories. As Ayalon put it, "The only way to force the leaders to finally sign a deal is by first winning over both peoples." Their plan calls for borders to be drawn on the basis of the 1967 lines, with possible exchanges of land on a one-to-one basis; the establishment of Jerusalem as the capital of both states, with Arab neighborhoods under Palestinian sovereignty and Jewish neighborhoods under Israeli sovereignty; and the return of Arab refugees only to the new Palestinian state, albeit with the establishment of an international compensation and rehabilitation fund, with Israeli participation, "in cognizance of the suffering" the refugees have endured. (A similar proposal, known as the Geneva Accord, announced shortly after the Nusseibeh-Ayalon plan by former Israeli cabinet member Yossi Beilin and Palestinian Authority negotiator Yasir Abed-Rabbo, also attracted wide domestic and international support.)

The Israelis and Palestinians need to see each other and acknowledge each other's historical narrative. The Palestinians need to acknowledge the Shoah and come to understand that their adversary is heavily burdened by a history of victimhood. Likewise, Jewish Israelis need to accept the Nakba as a core part of the Israeli-Palestinian experience. We're not there yet. We're not even close. But at least for the Palestinians, the Nusseibeh-Ayalon plan implicitly contains an Israeli apology insofar as it requires the explicit participation of Israel in the compensation and rehabilitation of Palestinian refugees. Perhaps this is not enough for some Palestinians. Perhaps some symbolic quotient of "return" is also required. But a settlement along these lines would eventually transform the "Jewish state" into a democratic Hebrew Republic.

No one is ready to accept this scenario. But this is what should happen—and in time, I dare say, it will happen. I would like to think that before this century is over, Israel will become a republic with a constitution that guarantees fully equal rights for both its Hebrew-speaking and its Arabic-speaking citizens. Perhaps someday Israel's language rather than its religion will define its national identity. Israel can gradually shed its theocratic aspects and erect a twenty-first-century "iron wall" between synagogue and state. A constitution will strip the rabbinical courts of any political powers or privileges. The physical wall that today divides Israelis from Palestinians living in the West Bank will be torn down. There will be no Mandelbaum Gates—but instead, open borders, free trade and a healthy, multicultural and economic interchange between all the peoples of ancient Palestine. There will probably be an Arabic-speaking Palestinian republic, quite possibly composed of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the West Bank and Gaza. All of this will be possible, even necessary, because a hundred years in the future "sovereignty" won't mean what it does today. No doubt, many thousands of "Hebrews" of Jewish ancestry will be living in the Palestinian state—just as there will be a sizable number of Arabic-speaking Palestinians, Muslim and Christian, living in the Israeli republic.

Perhaps the two republics will be federated. But in some way, somehow, these two peoples will be living together and sharing a land once periodically drenched in blood. That's my vision. I think its realization is inevitable, however unlikely it may seem today. But I am also certain that a hundred years from now, people will look back to the early twenty-first century and wonder at the fools who delayed peace with their messianic notions. ■

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# Europe's Answer to Wall Street

"Social capitalism" allows businesses to be both competitive and socially responsible.

**by STEVEN HILL**

A year and a half after an economic earthquake shook the world, the so-called experts are still trying to figure out what happened and how to move forward. In the shadows of that confusion, new economic models are beginning to find traction. Alternatives to Wall Street capitalism, the epicenter of the temblor, are suddenly getting a new hearing in the United States, whether it's Paul Volcker calling for reinstatement of Glass-Steagall regulation of the banking sector, the United Steelworkers announcing an alliance with the Mondragon cooperatives in Spain to develop manufacturing cooperatives in the United States, or Cleveland-based efforts to establish worker-owned co-ops in distressed communities [see Alperovitz, Howard and Williamson, "The Cleveland Model," March 1].

KAREN CALDICOTT

But the brightest spots in the postcollapse landscape are in Europe, which long ago advanced a degree of economic democracy that has proved its mettle in this crisis and therefore deserves closer inspection. If Americans want to learn about cooperatives, Europe is a great place to start. They produce an estimated 12 percent of the GDP of the European Union and involve, directly or indirectly, at least 60 percent of the population. Besides the Mondragon co-ops in Spain, in which 256 companies employ 100,000 people in industry, retail, finance and education, there's also Coop Italia, which operates the largest supermarket chain in Italy, employing 56,000 with more than 6 million members; housing co-ops like Poland's TUW; and the Co-operative Group in Britain, which is the world's largest consumer-owned business, with 4.5 million members.

However, most cooperatives are generally small-scale and thus unlikely anytime soon to replace the most important economic institution in modern mass economies, which is the corporation. The corporation, even with all its considerable warts, is the greatest wealth generator that humans have ever created, but its success raises the questions: Who gets to control that wealth? Whose pockets should the wealth flow into?

To answer those questions, Europe, led by Germany, has evolved over several decades one of its greatest contributions to the global economy. Practices unfamiliar to Americans, such as co-determination, supervisory boards and works councils, have been crucial in helping to harness capitalism's tremendous wealth-creating capacity so that its prosperity is broadly shared.

Co-determination has several features, one of which allows workers to elect representatives to corporate boards of directors known as supervisory boards. Supervisory boards then oversee company managers, who handle day-to-day operations. In Germany, the world's second-largest exporter and fourth-largest national economy, fully half of the boards of directors of the largest corporations—Siemens, BMW, Daimler, Deutsche Telekom and others—are elected by workers. In Sweden, one-third of a company's directors are worker-elected. To understand the significance of this, imagine if Wal-Mart were legally required to allow its workers to elect a third to half of its board, who would then oversee the CEO. Imagine how much that would change Wal-Mart's behavior toward its workers and supply chain. It's hard for Americans even to conceive of such a notion; indeed, when I ask Americans at my lectures how many of them have heard of worker-elected supervisory boards, usually no hands go up. Yet most European nations employ some version of this as a regular feature of their economy.

The impact has been impressive. Klas Levinson, a researcher for the former National Institute for Working Life in Sweden, is one of the world's experts on co-determination. I met with Levinson at the institute's Stockholm headquarters, a sleek glass structure with the air of a university campus. "Co-determination is Europe's little secret advantage," he told me. "The idea that elected worker directors should sit side by side as equal decision-makers with stockholder representatives, supervising management, is a little-known yet unprecedented extension of democratic principle into the corporate sphere."

Levinson's research shows that employee representation on corporate supervisory boards, contrary to fears that it would cause tension or render decision-making too cumbersome, has actually fostered cooperation between management and workers. This, in turn, has benefited the businesses as well as the workers. Workers have input, even into important decisions, so companies are less plagued by labor strife and internal schisms. And workers are well compensated, with high salaries and the most generous social support systems in the world.

One of Levinson's studies of Swedish businesses found that two-thirds of executives viewed co-determination as "very" or "rather" positive, because it contributed to a positive climate, made board decisions "deeply rooted among the employees" and facilitated implementation of "tough decisions." Eight of ten chairmen were satisfied with the arrangement and felt it was not important to reduce worker representation. An EU directive establishing a continentwide framework for board-level employee representation went into effect in October 2004, firmly

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*Steven Hill is the author of the recently published* Europe's Promise: Why the European Way Is the Best Hope in an Insecure Age *(EuropesPromise.org), from which this article is adapted. He is director of the political reform program at the New America Foundation.*

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rooting supervisory boards in Europe's economic culture.

The other pillar of co-determination is known as works councils, which are just what the name implies—elected councils at businesses, through which employees gain significant input into working conditions. Works councils, which are separate from labor unions but often populated by trade unionists, have real clout. They enjoy veto power over certain management decisions pertaining to treatment of employees, such as redeployment and dismissal. They also have "co-decision rights" to meet with management to discuss the firm's finances, work and holiday schedules, work organization and other procedures. In addition, they benefit from "consultation rights" in planning the introduction of new technologies and in mergers and layoffs, as well as in obtaining information useful in contract negotiations, such as profit and wage data. In some nations, including Germany, Sweden and France, works councils have acquired even more rights and greater influence.

In France the food manufacturer Danone agreed with its works councils to specific rules on job cuts, including consideration of union proposals to avoid layoffs and worker transfers. The Polish union Solidarity has said that the inclusion of Central and Eastern European worker representatives in works councils is "the most effective and sometimes nearly the only way" for them to obtain information on multinational companies' operations. German law stipulates that factorywide workers' assemblies must be held at least four times a year, at which a management representative must report on the plant and the business. The head of the works council also reports, and workers use these assemblies to promote their views and, if necessary, criticize company decisions in front of management.

In 1994 the EU issued a pioneering directive on works councils, stipulating that every multinational with at least 1,000 workers, and at least 150 workers in two or more EU nations, must negotiate agreements with works councils. Other nations have supplemented that directive by requiring councils in every workplace. Studies by Princeton's Jonas Pontusson and others have concluded that works councils contribute to efficiency by improving communication, which in turn improves the quality of decisions and legitimizes decisions in the eyes of workers. The studies also found that works councils are associated with lower absenteeism, more worker training, better handling of grievances and smoother implementation of health and safety standards. It turns out that when workers are given a degree of consultation, it makes them more satisfied and more productive.

In Germany works councils and supervisory boards can take substantial credit for the fact that, while the US unemployment rate has more than doubled during this economic crisis, Germany's has barely increased. That's because Chancellor Angela Merkel was heavily influenced by works councils and labor unions, and by the culture of consultation in general, to adopt a policy called *Kurzarbeit*, or "short-time work," in which, instead of laying off millions, employees agreed to spread the pain by working shorter weeks. Most of the lost wages have been made up from a special fund squirreled away during more prosperous times. As a result, more Germans have money in their pockets, and communities and households haven't been decimated by layoffs like they have been in the United States. (Despite the advantages, when Larry Summers, one of Barack Obama's closest economic advisers, was asked why the president didn't pursue short-time work to stem the economic bleeding, he dismissed the idea, saying the White House wanted to create new jobs, not preserve old ones.)

Co-determination has proved crucial to Europe's economic success and its broadly distributed wealth. "The practical effect of co-determination," says Levinson, "is that corporate managers and executives must confer extensively with employees and unions about a range of issues, even about the future direction of the company." Co-determination reflects European "social capitalism," with its communitarian values, long-term strategic vision and emphasis on manufacturing, much the way huge executive bonuses, quarterly earnings and a bloated financial sector reflect America's Wall Street capitalism. Social capitalism has both produced and benefited from the culture of consultation, which has also contributed to the creation of cooperatives and resulted in a vibrant small-business sector that produces two-thirds of European jobs, compared with only half of US jobs.

Interestingly, the conquering US powers in World War II can take some credit for co-determination. After the war a group of prominent German economists, led by future chancellor Ludwig Erhard, Walter Eucken and others, proposed what they called the "social market economy" in the belief that the market should serve broader social goals. And it was conservative Christian Democrats, not the leftish Social Democrats, who introduced this idea. The Allied powers encouraged this line of thinking, since it decentralized economic power, shifting it away from the German industrialists who had supported the Nazi war effort. In effect, US planners "punished" postwar Germany with economic democracy as a way of handicapping concentrated wealth and power, helping to birth the most democratic corporate governance structure the world had ever seen.

In the decades after Germany's launch of social capitalism, co-determination spread throughout Europe; it has been adopted in most of the new EU member states from Central and Eastern Europe. Sixty years after its genesis, co-determination is a core element of the European economy, and it distinguishes Europe's social capitalism from America's Wall Street capitalism.

Critics allege that co-determination hurts competitiveness, but the success of the European economy and of its many global businesses belies this criticism. Contrary to the US media stereotype that "old man" Europe is chronically plagued by a weak, sclerotic economy, Europe has the largest economy in the world, producing nearly a third of the world's GDP. Indeed, its economy is almost as large as those of the United States and China combined. Europe has more Fortune 500 companies than the United States and China together, and Europe had a higher per capita growth rate from 1998 to 2008 than the United States. Long denigrated by US pundits as the land of high unemployment, the EU currently even has a slightly lower unemployment rate than the United States. Indeed, the World Economic Forum in 2008–09 ranked Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Germany and the Netherlands—all of which employ some degree of co-determination—among the top ten most competitive economies in the world. They are also ranked at or near the top of most

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# Jerusalem (III)

## Should Israel be able to build residences in its capital city?

A great brouhaha has arisen about a mid-level bureaucrat in Israel's Ministry of the Interior releasing a routine notice that 1,600 residences were to be built in Jerusalem. To the surprise of many, this routine announcement was construed as an insult or worse to Vice President Biden, who was visiting in Israel at the time. Mrs. Clinton, the Secretary of State, also was "shocked" and sent a "stern message" of displeasure to Mr. Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of Israel.

### What are the facts?

**Capital of Israel.** Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and will remain that whatever the final accommodation with the Palestinians may be and whatever the "world," including the United States, may desire. That has been understood and recognized by every U.S. administration since the very birth of Israel. Therefore, to be "shocked" by an announcement that Israel will build housing for its citizens in its capital is strange. This is a trumped-up situation and puts the relationship with Israel with one fell swoop on an entirely different level. It is strange because the President himself has stated that Jerusalem should remain undivided as Israel's capital. So has Mrs. Clinton, especially when she was senator of New York and felt to be much dependent on Jewish support. It almost appears as if somebody in the Administration wanted to produce a "crisis" and was looking for an expedient way to accomplish that.

> "Jerusalem is the undivided capital of Israel…there is no reason at all why the Israeli government could not plan and build residences for its citizens…"

The Muslim Palestinians also claim Jerusalem, or at least its eastern part, as their capital. They want the city to be divided – as it was between 1948 when the Jordanians occupied the eastern part of the city – until 1967, when the Israelis liberated it in the Six-Day-War.

The principal basis for the Muslim claim is that Jerusalem does indeed contain an Islamic holy site, namely the Temple Mount (sacred to both Muslims and Jews) with its two mosques, El Aksa and the Dome of the Rock. It is the place from which Mohammed, who never in his life had set foot in the city, is believed to have ascended to heaven. But aware that it was the holy city of Christians and Jews, and wishing to convert them to his new religion, he commanded his followers to build a mosque in Jerusalem. But never in Muslim history did this mosque or this city compare in significance to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina – cities that no "infidel' may visit.

**A tenuous Muslim claim.** It is on the basis of this religious tradition that the Muslims designated the entire Jewish Temple Mount to be their holy site. The Israeli government, in its constant spirit of accommodation to Muslim sensibilities, has largely acceded to this tradition and has put the area in and around the two mosques entirely under Muslim control. But how would Christians feel if, instead of from the Temple Mount, Muslim tradition had Mohammed ascend from the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and if the Muslim Arabs were to claim that site as their property? The Christian world, often ready to consent to Muslim claims against Jews and Israelis, would be greatly astonished and would certainly resist such claim. But Muslim Arab assertiveness doesn't end there. On the tenuous claim of their right to the Temple Mount, they have construed a claim to the entire city of Jerusalem (or at the very least to its eastern part), which they have declared to be their "third holiest city." And, it would be an insult to all Muslims and all Arabs to leave the city in the hands of the "infidel Jews."

**Jerusalem: Never an Arab capital.** The city of Jerusalem – in contrast to Baghdad, Cairo or Damascus – has never played any major role in the political and religious lives of the Muslim Arabs. It was never a political center, never a national, or even a provincial or sub-provincial capital of any country, since Biblical times. It was the site of one Muslim holy place, but otherwise a backwater to the Arabs. The passion for Jerusalem was not discovered by the Muslim Arabs until most recent history.

But Jerusalem has stood at the center of the Jewish people's national life since King David made it his capital in 1000 BCE. After the return from Babylonian exile, Jerusalem again served as the capital of the Jewish people for the next five-and-a-half centuries.

Jews are not the usurpers in Jerusalem. They have been living there since the Biblical era and have been the majority population since the 19th century. Jews have synagogues and other holy sites in most cities of the world. But do they claim sovereignty over those cities because of it? Of course not! It would be preposterous and people wouldn't accept it. Jerusalem is the undivided capital of Israel and will remain so. That is why there is no reason at all that the Israeli government could not plan and build residences for its citizens – Jews and Arabs – in any part of the city. Those who get out of joint about that are either misinformed or looking for a pretext to create a "situation."

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lists for quality of life, healthcare and social benefits. That's not a coincidence, since co-determination allows for both economic vibrancy and more egalitarian social policy. And while the United States also ranks high in competitiveness, it is near the bottom among most-developed countries in healthcare, social benefits and quality of life.

Sweden, Germany and other European countries are proof that you can have it all—but only if you have the right institutions to facilitate both a powerful economic engine and the supportive institutions and benefits to harness that engine and keep employees and families healthy and productive. These distinctly European advances may be the most important innovations in the world economy since the invention of the modern corporation, since they encourage free enterprise combined with economic democracy and worker consultation that does not unduly burden entrepreneurship and commerce. The advances allow businesses to be both competitive and socially responsible.

In effect, Europe has reinvented the corporation. Yet the latest critiques of capitalism by leading authors like Naomi Klein, Noam Chomsky and the producers of the popular film *The Corporation* tend to view all corporations and all capitalisms as the same. American progressives, while searching for effective responses to globalization, appear to be mostly unaware of these intriguing European inventions. Movements to revoke the charters of offensive corporations, while having gut-level appeal, have failed to recognize that European corporations are fundamentally different animals from their "disaster capitalism" US counterparts. When I asked a leading globalization critic from the Economic Policy Institute his opinion of co-determination and works councils, he replied dismissively, "Bah, those just lead to company unions," a demonstrably false claim.

Of course, the American right rejects co-determination as socialism incarnate, ignoring its potential to renew capitalism and support real family values. While the United States does not have a strong history of economic democracy, we do have a recurring pattern of responding to economic crisis by extending stakeholder rights as well as New Deal–type supports. This has resulted in employee stock-option plans, a small but vigorous co-op movement and stakeholder laws passed by an unusual labor-business coalition in Pennsylvania as a shield against corporate raiders, and other reforms. The Steelworkers alliance with the Mondragon cooperatives is another encouraging sign. These are some of the American threads of consultation and economic democracy that can be used to fashion a progressive response to the stunning failure of Wall Street capitalism. There is nothing magical or culturally determined about Europe's use of co-determination. All it takes to start the ball rolling here is a legislator, a governor or a president willing to introduce such a law. What would be the argument against it—that the CEOs who nearly destroyed the American economy and then came back for a government bailout know best? That's a debate any progressive leader should relish. ■

# Letters

*(continued from page 2)*

MINEOLA, N.Y.

Why is America's foreign policy establishment so astonished by Bibi Netanyahu's serial intransigence? Taking Washington's support for granted has long been an article of faith in Tel Aviv. Though Democrats and Republicans continue to vilify one another over everything else, both parties march in lockstep with AIPAC and any and all Israeli policies, no matter how brutal or illegal. Little wonder, then, that despite Vice President Biden's effusive praise for a US-Israel special kinship, Prime Minister Netanyahu publicly embarrassed his state's staunchest ally and chief benefactor.

Israel's military pre-eminence, European standard of living and technologically sophisticated economy are due in great measure to Uncle Sam's per annum stipend of $3 billion. Yet Israeli leaders never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity when it comes to the two-state solution.

Gen. David Petraeus's admonishments notwithstanding, no American president—including Obama—will ever emulate Ike and summon the courage to overturn such naked irredentism.

ROSARIO A. IACONIS

LOUISVILLE

Your nostalgic reference to the days when "President Eisenhower was not afraid to threaten economic sanctions" against Israel needs to be placed in historical context. Eisenhower was elected at a time of heightened cold war tensions, when Israel was perceived by many in DC as a closet, albeit nonaligned, friend of the Soviet Union.

Key to his willingness to take on Israel and push for Middle East peace was that top CIA officials like Kermit Roosevelt, and the State Department's Henry Byroade, covertly supported the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism, led by rabbis Elmer Berger and Morris Lazaron and San Francisco businessman George Levison. In the early '50s the ACJ was a major voice in Reform Judaism, speaking for about 25 percent of US Jews.

In 1953 Levison and ACJ president Lessing Rosenwald met with Eisenhower to discuss ways the ACJ could assist the Middle East peace initiative, and to distinguish Judaism from "expansionist Zionism." The CIA's Roosevelt also recruited Jacob Blaustein of the American Jewish Committee to pressure Israel into accepting back about 200,000 Palestinian refugees of the 1948 war.

Critical to the ACJ acting as a CIA front organization was the American Friends of the Middle East, created by Roosevelt and Berger, with help from Aramco's Col. William Eddy. AFME funded trips to the region by Berger and Lazaron in 1954 and '55. Freedom House's Leo Cherne also worked with the ACJ to create a philanthropic fund, which, had the Eisenhower peace initiative borne fruit, would have assisted Palestinian refugees (with a TVA for the Jordan Valley) and Arab Jewish communities in Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Iraq. Eisenhower called for Israel to end its Zionist mission, and Berger's 1955 trip focused on how CIA and Aramco money funneled through the AFME to the ACJ philanthropic fund could maintain Jewish communities in the Arab states.

The Eisenhower administration worked diligently to create a supportive American Jewish constituency group in the ACJ. The ACJ was even encouraged by the Luce family of Time-Life fame to develop a network of anti-Zionist Reform temples, starting with Chicago's Lakeside Congregation, and Jewish schools with a message that opposed Jewish "peoplehood" in favor of Jewish spirituality. (Readers who would like to know more can read Thomas Kolsky's *Jews Against Zionism*.)

DAVID EUGENE BLANK

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# Books & the Arts.

## The Improbability Pump

**by JERRY A. COYNE**

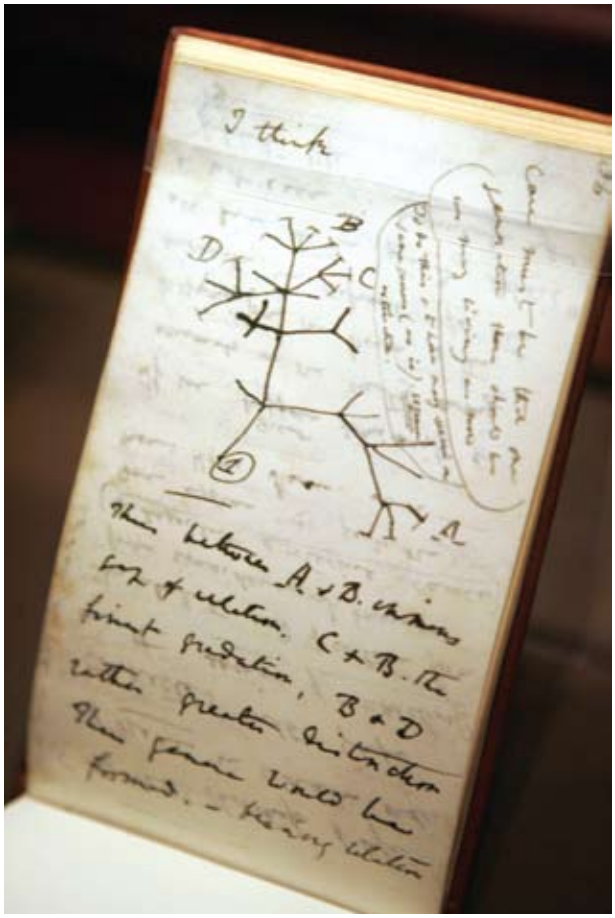
Imagine for a moment that a large proportion of Americans—let's say half—rejected the "germ theory" of infectious disease. Maladies like swine flu, malaria and AIDS aren't caused by micro-organisms, they claim, but by the displeasure of gods, whom they propitiate by praying, consulting shamans and sacrificing goats. Now, you'd surely find this a national disgrace, for those people would be utterly, unequivocally wrong. Although it's called germ *theory*, the idea that infections are spread by small creatures is also a *fact*, supported by mountains of evidence. You don't get malaria unless you carry a specific protozoan parasite. We know how it causes the disease, and we see that when you kill it with drugs, the disease goes away. How, we'd ask, could people ignore all this evidence in favor of baseless superstition?

But that's fiction, right? Well, not entirely, for it applies precisely to another "theory" that is also a fact: the theory of evolution. Over the past quarter-century, poll after poll has revealed that nearly half of all Americans flatly reject evolution, many clinging to the ancient superstition that the earth was created only 6,000 years ago, complete with all existing species. But as Richard Dawkins shows in his splendid new book, *The Greatest Show on Earth*, the theory of evolution is supported by at least as much evidence as is the germ theory of disease—heaps of it, and from many areas of biology. So why is it contemptible to reject germ theory but socially acceptable to reject evolutionary theory?

One answer is religion. Unlike germ theory, the idea of evolution strikes at the heart of human ego, suggesting that we were not the special object of God's attention but were made by the same blind and mindless process of natural selection that also built ferns, fish and rabbits. Another answer is ignorance: most Americans are simply unaware of the multifarious evidence that makes evolution more than "just a theory," and don't even realize that a *scientific* theory is far more than idle speculation.

While Dawkins has produced several brilliant books on the marvels of evolution and natural selection, he's never before written at length about the evidence for evolution. *The Greatest Show on Earth* can be seen as his response to ongoing and nonscientific opposition to evolution. In his previous book, *The God Delusion*, Dawkins mounted a withering attack on belief that was surely motivated in part by his incessant battles with faith-based creationism. In *The Greatest Show on Earth* he finally addresses the problem of ignorance, drawing together the diverse evidence for evolution to show that "evolution is a fact. Beyond reasonable doubt, beyond serious doubt, beyond sane, informed, intelligent doubt, beyond doubt evolution is a fact." Dawkins has two goals here. The first is to change the minds of those who doubt or deny evolution by presenting them with more than 400 pages of scientific evidence. But changing minds is a big job, at least in the United States: in a 2006 *Time* magazine poll, 64 percent of Americans declared that if science disproved one of their religious beliefs, they'd reject the science in favor of their faith. (The British aren't quite so defiant: one week after its publication, *The Greatest Show on Earth* debuted at No. 1 on the *Sunday Times* bestseller list.) More realistically, Dawkins hopes to bolster those who already accept evolution but "find themselves inadequately prepared to argue the case." And here he succeeds brilliantly.

In contrast, Jerry Fodor and Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini (hereafter "F&P") think the case should be dismissed. In their provocatively titled *What Darwin Got Wrong* they contend that ever since the 1859 publication of *On the Origin of Species*, scientists and laymen alike have been bamboozled by Darwin's key idea: natural selection, which F&P see as logically incoherent and lacking in empirical support. Since the authors are neither creationists nor crackpots—Fodor, a respected philosopher of mind, and Piattelli-Palmarini, a cognitive scientist, both accept the fact of evolution—their




MARY ALTAFFER/AP

A copy of Charles Darwin's "B" notebook, exhibited in New York in 2005

**The Greatest Show on Earth**
*The Evidence for Evolution.*
By Richard Dawkins.
Free Press. 470 pp. $30.

**What Darwin Got Wrong**
By Jerry Fodor and Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini.
Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 264 pp. $26.

*Jerry A. Coyne is a professor of ecology and evolution at the University of Chicago. His latest book is* Why Evolution Is True *(Viking/Penguin).*

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arguments deserve careful scrutiny. Unfortunately, in the end their critique proves as biologically uninformed as it is strident, and despite their repeated avowals that Darwinism is dead, it refuses to lie down.

Demonstrating the truth of natural selection is just one of Dawkins's aims, for the theory of evolution is composed of several more or less independent parts, which I like to describe in one longish sentence: "Life on earth evolved gradually, beginning with one primitive species; it then branched out over time, throwing off many new and diverse species—and the process producing the illusion of design in organisms is natural selection." This sentence constitutes a *scientific theory*, which is not just a guess but an informed statement about the general principles that explain many observations about nature.

Establishing that all these principles

**The sort of 'bad design' we see is precisely what we'd expect if evolution were true.**

are true is a tall order, clearly demanding lots of evidence. And for most people, the evidence boils down to one thing: fossils. Although Darwin was faced with a scant fossil record (it played almost no role in his *Origin of Species*), since 1859 paleontologists have unearthed a wealth of fossils demonstrating not only gradual change of species over time but also the branching of lineages and the so-called "missing links" that connect major groups of animals. We see marine plankton, whose fossil record is superb, changing slowly and gradually, and early horses branching off into numerous descendants (only a few of which survive today). We have transitional fossils between fish and amphibians, mammals and reptiles, whales and their deerlike ancestors, birds and feathered dinosaurs, and, of course, fossils that link *Homo sapiens* to our cranially challenged ancestors. Evolution, you might say, is written in the rocks.

But as Dawkins points out, "we don't need fossils in order to demonstrate that evolution is a fact. The evidence for evolution would be entirely secure, even if not a single corpse had ever fossilized." What is this other evidence?

One type lies within the bodies of living organisms. In a wonderful chapter called "History Written All Over Us," Dawkins shows that animal anatomy is like a medieval palimpsest, carrying traces of our evolutionary ancestry. Human goose bumps, for instance, serve no function: they're remnants of the muscles used by our mammalian ancestors—and our living relatives like cats—to erect their fur, making them warmer and giving enemies the illusion of greater size. Modern genome sequencing has also uncovered vestigial DNA: useless, broken genes that are functional in our relatives and presumably were too in our ancestors. Our own genome, for instance, harbors nonfunctional genes that, in our bird and reptile relatives, produce egg yolk. Embryology—the study of development—brings more proof to the table. The pharyngeal arches of the early, fishlike human embryo are derived directly from the gill arches of fish, though they go on to become, among other things, our larynx and eustachian tube.

Even more evidence for evolution comes from the "bad designs" of animals and plants, which, Dawkins observes, look nothing like *de novo* creations of an efficient celestial engineer. His favorite example—and mine—is the recurrent laryngeal nerve, which runs from the brain to the larynx. In mammals it doesn't take the direct route (a matter of a few inches) but makes a curiously long detour, running from the head to the heart, looping around the aorta and then doubling back up to the neck. In the giraffe, this detour involves traversing that enormous neck twice—adding about fifteen feet of superfluous nerve. Anyone who's dissected an animal in biology class will surely agree with Dawkins's conclusion: "the overwhelming impression you get from surveying any part of the innards of a large animal is that it is a mess! Not only would a designer never have made a mistake like that nervous detour; a decent designer would never have perpetuated *anything* of the shambles that is the criss-crossing maze of arteries, veins, nerves, intestines, wads of fat and muscle, mesenteries and more."

Creationists often object to this sort of argument, saying that it's not scientific but theological. God is inscrutable, they claim, so how could we possibly know how he would or would not design creatures? But this misses the point, for the "bad design" we see is *precisely what we'd expect if evolution were true*. The laryngeal nerve takes that long detour because, in our fishy ancestors, it was lined up behind a blood vessel, with both nerve and vessel servicing the gills. As the artery moved backward during its evolution to the mammalian aorta, the nerve was constrained to move behind it, although its target (the larynx, an evolutionary descendant of the gill arch) remained up in the neck. If you insist that such designs reflect God's plan, then you must admit that his plan was to make things look as if they had evolved.

Finally, Dawkins provides evidence from a completely different realm: that of biogeography, the study of how plants and animals are distributed over the earth. Why do volcanic islands like Hawaii have plenty of unique plants, birds and insects (most resembling species from the nearest mainland) but no native amphibians, freshwater fish or land mammals? Such patterns defy explanation by any form of creationism. Instead, they bespeak long-distance migration of ancestors to newly formed islands, followed by the evolution of new species.

Fossils, embryology, bad design, molecular biology, vestigial traits, biogeography—all conspire to demonstrate the truth of evolution. All are described in Dawkins's famously lyrical prose and lavishly illustrated with color photos. Two chapters stand out. One, "You Did It Yourself in Nine Months" (the title is a reprise of evolutionist J.B.S. Haldane's reply to a woman who insisted that it was impossible for evolution to change a single cell into a complex human body), is simply the best existing description of how a linear DNA sequence codes for a three-dimensional body. The other deals with "Evolutionary Theodicy," Dawkins's idea that ecosystems reflect not harmonious central planning but inefficient natural selection. In an efficiently designed world, for instance, trees would be only a few feet tall; in an evolved one, natural selection among individuals competing for sunlight produces a lot of extra wood.

Dawkins's specialty has always been exploring and extolling natural selection, and this is where *The Greatest Show on Earth* really shines. But first, since selection is so uncontroversial to Dawkins yet so maligned by F&P, it behooves us to understand what it is. In principle, natural selection is simple. It is neither a "law" nor a "mechanism." It is, instead, a "process"—a process that is inevitable if two common conditions are met. First, some genes must harbor variation because of mutation; and second, some of those mutant genes must be better at replicating than

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others—usually because they improve the survival and reproduction of their carriers. Suppose, for instance, that the brown-colored ancestors of the polar bear included some carrying mutations in "pigment genes" that gave them lighter coats. These mutant bears would have an advantage: being more camouflaged in the snow than their darker confreres, they'd be able to sneak up on seals more easily and so get more to eat. Because well-fed individuals leave more offspring, over time the bear gene pool would become increasingly enriched in light-color genes. Eventually the species would evolve the familiar white polar bear coat. And this is the way, we think, that all organisms acquire that appearance of "design" that, before Darwin, was attributed to God.

Although we evolutionary biologists might describe the polar bear scenario as "natural selection acting on coat color," that's only our shorthand for the longer description given above. There is no agency, no external force of nature that "acts" on individuals. There is only differential replication of genes, with the winners behaving as if they were selfish (that's shorthand, too).

Dawkins describes selection as an "improbability pump," for over time the competition among genes can yield amazingly complex and extraordinary species. Here's how he describes the evolution of tigers:

> A tiger's DNA is also a "duplicate me" program, but it contains an almost fantastically large digression as an essential part of the efficient execution of its fundamental message. That digression is a tiger, complete with fangs, claws, running muscles, stalking and pouncing instincts. The tiger's DNA says, "Duplicate me by the round-about route of building a tiger first."

Only Dawkins could describe a tiger as just one way DNA has devised to make more of itself. And that is why he is famous: absolute scientific accuracy expressed with the wonder of a child—a *very smart* child.

Natural selection has always been the most contested part of evolutionary theory. Many people who have no problem with evolution bridle at the thought that it's all driven by a mindless and unguided natural process. Indeed, while most scientists accepted the notions of evolution and common ancestry soon after Darwin proposed them in 1859, natural selection wasn't widely accepted by biologists until about 1930. The main problem was, and still is, a paucity of evidence. While the idea of natural selection seems eminently sound, people want to see it actually changing species in nature. And since the process is usually very slow, that evidence is hard to get for living organisms and nearly impossible for fossils.

It's this difficulty that leads Dawkins to observe that natural selection is on wobblier legs than the other tenets of evolutionary theory, such as evolutionary change and the branching pattern of life. "Nowadays it is no longer possible to dispute the fact of evolution itself—it has graduated to become a theorum," Dawkins writes, using a neologism for a scientific theory, "or obviously supported fact—but it could (just) be doubted that natural selection is its major driving force."

Well, maybe, but I think Dawkins is a bit too timid in his defense of natural selection. While biologists agree that natural selection is not the *only* cause of genetic change in populations, the evidence is strong that it's the only one that can produce the remarkable adaptations of animals and plants to their environment—the elephant's trunk, the cactus's spines, the tiger's fangs and so on—the designlike quality of organisms that, as Darwin put it, "most justly excites our admiration." For one thing, none of the alternatives seem to work. A once-popular rival of natural selection, for instance, was Lamarckism, the idea that the changes acquired by an individual during its lifetime could somehow be imprinted onto its genes and passed on to succeeding generations. This idea failed for two reasons. First, it is incapable of explaining "design" in general: most adaptations, like the tiger's fangs and cactus's spines, can't be credibly explained as acquired changes that later became genetic. Further, it turns out that almost no acquired changes are inherited. One example: despite millenniums of circumcision, Jewish boys are still obstinately born with foreskins.

In contrast, *artificial* selection has been stunningly successful. Virtually everything that we eat, grow or pet has involved transforming a wild species, through selective breeding, into something radically different. (Bear in mind that the ancestor of the Chihuahua is the wolf.) And of the thousands of selection experiments performed on species in the laboratory, I know of fewer than a dozen that have failed to elicit a response. Why is this relevant to natural selection? As Dawkins observes, "Artificial selection is not just an *analogy* for natural selection. Artificial selection constitutes a true *experimental*—as opposed to observational—test of the hypothesis that selection causes evolutionary change." That's because both processes inexorably result from genetic variation that is adaptive in the current environment, with the "environment" in one case dominated by humans who decide which individuals get to live and breed.

Further, the kinds of adaptations that we find—and don't find—in nature are precisely what we'd expect if they were built by natural selection. Natural selection, for instance, can't produce features in one species that are good only for members of a different species. And we never see such features: if one species does something that helps another species, it also helps itself (cleaner fish remove parasites from other species, but thereby get a free meal). Natural selection also predicts that "altruistic" behaviors should be preferentially directed at relatives, who carry the same genes. This, too, is what we see, starting with one's closest relatives—siblings and children. Natural selection builds features that benefit individuals, not populations or species. As expected, we find features beneficial to individuals but harmful to groups (when male lions usurp a pride of females, they kill the females' cubs, earning them the right to reproduce but reducing the population of lions).

**Dawkins describes selection as an 'improbability pump' that yields complex species.**

Finally, we've observed natural selection in real time: bacteria evolve resistance to antibiotics, plants to herbicides, insects to insecticides. This is genuine natural selection, even though the species are responding to human interference with the environment. And if you don't like those, biologists have cataloged dozens of "real" cases of natural selection in which species ranging from plants to birds adapt to natural changes in the environment.

Of course, it's impossible to prove that *every* useful feature of organisms was built by selection. The evolution of some species happened when we weren't around, and other species are impossible to experiment on. Nevertheless, the evidence for selection is sufficiently strong that, although Dawk-

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ins notes that the importance of selection might "(just) be doubted," he also observes, "All reputable biologists go on to agree that natural selection is one of [evolution's] most important driving forces, although—as some biologists insist more than others—not the only one."

Although F&P aren't biologists, they couldn't disagree more. While accepting the notion of evolution (grudgingly admitting that it's "perfectly possible—in fact entirely likely"), they assert, loudly and repeatedly, that natural selection is not just wrong but "quite possibly fatally wrong," not just flawed but "irredeemably flawed." They conclude that natural selection "falls radically short of explaining the appearance of new forms of life."

## Does a new wrinkle in the scientific literature nullify all of mainstream biology?

Could biologists really have been so mistaken these past 150 years? It seems unlikely, but scientific consensus has been wrong before (the idea of continental drift, for instance, was once widely rejected), so let's examine F&P's claims. These fall into two groups. The first is that scientists have recently discovered a lot of things about genetics and development that make natural selection look ineffective:

> Contrary to traditional opinion, it needs to be emphasized that natural selection among traits generated at random cannot by itself be the basic principle of evolution. Rather, there must be strong, often decisive, endogenous constraints and hosts of regulations on the phenotypic options that exogenous selection operates on.

In other words, Darwin's assertion that species are "quite plastic" is wrong: organisms are so constrained by their biological nature that they're not free to change, even if it would be good for them to do so. So what are these "constraints" and "regulations" that render natural selection impotent? F&P proffer a long list (I count at least two dozen items), including the following phenomena: horizontal gene transfer (movement of DNA between individuals of the same generation and between different species), alternative splicing of genes, robustness, modularity, molecular drive, entrenchment, developmental noise, phenotypic plasticity and self-organization. To the layman, this salvo of arcane terms is daunting, and even I, an evolutionary geneticist of forty years' standing, was taken aback. But not for long, because on close inspection we find that none of these phenomena put much of a brake on natural selection.

Let's look at one of these: phenotypic plasticity. This refers to the ability of a phenotype—an observable trait or characteristic of an organism—to change within a single generation in response to environmental fluctuations. This is what happens, for instance, when you get a tan. If you have an outdoor cat, its fur gets thicker in winter. The plumage of Arctic animals like the ptarmigan, ermine and Arctic hare changes color from brown to white as winter comes on. Even the lowly brussels sprout has sophisticated plasticity: when it detects that a sprout-eating butterfly has laid eggs on the plant, it changes its leaf chemistry to attract parasitic wasps that destroy those eggs.

F&P imply that somehow—they're not clear about how—this ability to undergo adaptive developmental change within a generation prevents natural selection from causing genetic change *between* generations. But that isn't the case. In fact, far from being an impediment to natural selection, the ability of an individual to adapt to a changing environment is a *product* of natural selection! Individuals who can tan in the sun (and thus prevent melanomas) have an advantage over those whose pigmentation is fixed. Cats are better off if the length of their fur suits them to the seasons. Genes that are able to respond to predictable variation in the environment will always outcompete those that produce only a fixed (and hence episodically maladaptive) trait.

And so it is with all the "constraints" on selection detailed by F&P. A reader lacking training in science might skim over the rather tedious discussion of these phenomena and assume that F&P know what they're talking about. That reader would be wrong. Look at it this way: if there really were so many constraints on selection, and if development really were so complex and tightly interconnected that organisms could not respond to natural selection, then why would *artificial* selection be so effective at changing animals and plants?

Indeed, virtually none of the biologists who study the "constraints" described by F&P share their dim view of natural selection. That's because, over and over again, selection has wrought the most improbable and unpredictable changes in animals and plants. F&P claim, for example, that selection could never produce winged pigs because of developmental constraints: "Pigs don't have wings because there is no place on pigs to put them. There are all sorts of ways you'd have to change a pig if you wanted to add wings. You'd have to do something to its weight, and its shape, and its musculature, and its nervous system, and its bones; to say nothing of retrofitting feathers."

Haven't F&P heard of bats? Bats evolved from small four-legged mammals, probably resembling shrews. You could say the same thing about shrewlike beasts that F&P did about pigs: how could they possibly evolve wings? And yet they did: selection simply retooled the forelegs into wings, along with modifying the animal's weight, shape, musculature, nervous system and bones for flying (no feathers needed). One of the great joys of being a biologist is learning about the many species in nature whose evolution would appear, a priori, impossible.

Beyond distorting the scientific literature, F&P make a number of claims that are simply silly. I mention just one: "The textbook cases of Mendelian inheritance, in spite of their great historical and didactic importance, are more the exception than the rule." This came as a surprise to me. In fact, cases of Mendelian inheritance (the random assortment of parental genes into sperm and eggs) *are* the rule; if they weren't, genetic counseling would be useless. Statements like this typify the authors' attitude toward science throughout their book: they seize on some new wrinkle in the scientific literature, like a rare gene that doesn't behave according to Mendel's rules, and interpret it as a revolution that nullifies all of mainstream biology. This lack of grounding is often seen in work by science journalists who make their living touting "revolutionary" new findings, but it is inexcusable in a supposedly serious book written by academics.

Given F&P's expertise, you'd expect them to be on firmer ground with their second objection to natural selection, which is philosophical. But again they founder, making illogical arguments and distorting how biologists work. Natural selection is

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philosophically incoherent, they claim, because it doesn't "support counterfactuals." (A counterfactual is a conditional statement about what hasn't happened but could if certain conditions were met. The paradigmatic example is Tevye's song "If I Were a Rich Man," from *Fiddler on the Roof*.) What F&P mean is that in real organisms, evolution often involves simultaneous changes in several features, and we simply don't know which changes reflected natural selection (that is, which traits had variation that directly affected survival or reproduction) and which traits were what they call "free riders": features that weren't subject to selection but were carried along, perhaps as nonadaptive byproducts of genes that evolved.

Here's an example: during the evolution of mammals from reptiles, several features changed at the same time. The limbs moved underneath the body, the teeth became differentiated, some jawbones shrank and the braincase got bigger. Now, which of these traits evolved by natural selection, and which, if any, might have only been byproducts? Maybe selection acted to enlarge the cranium but the reduced jawbones were only a passive, nonselected byproduct of "braincase" genes.

Even single traits have several effects that could, in principle, respond differently to natural selection. The hemoglobin in our blood, for example, carries oxygen but also happens to be red. How do we know that selection didn't favor the color itself (perhaps to make anger or blushing more evident) rather than the oxygen-transport ability?

Finally, some "traits" are inseparable even in principle: how can we tell whether the ancestors of whales experienced selection for "swimming" as opposed to "flapping their flukes up and down?" Fluke-flapping, of course, *causes* swimming. Evolutionary biologists aren't much concerned with this sort of distinction, and I won't consider it further.

Because biologists can't make any of these distinctions, say F&P, natural selection is incoherent. They call this the "selection-for" problem. And they add that artificial selection doesn't suffer from this problem. Since animal and plant breeders consciously select for certain traits, like higher milk yield or uglier bulldogs, we know exactly which features experience selection (the bulldog's puggish face) and which are byproducts (the respiratory problems that come with puggish faces). F&P therefore find Darwin's analogy between artificial and natural selection dubious, for

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"only minds are sensitive to distinctions among counterfactuals," and "natural selection doesn't have a mind." In the end, declare F&P, natural selection cannot be true because "a theory that doesn't determine the truth values of relevant counterfactuals cannot explain the distribution of traits in the actual world."

But wait a minute. If you translate that last sentence into layman's English, here's what it says: "Since it's impossible to figure out exactly which changes in organisms occur via direct selection and which are byproducts, natural selection can't operate." Clearly, F&P are confusing our ability to understand *how* a process operates with *whether* it operates. It's like saying that because we don't understand how gravity works, things don't fall.

Our inability to understand all the details is not a reason to claim natural selection doesn't work.

What's worse is that, contra F&P, evolutionary biologists have grappled for decades with the question of how to decide which evolving features of species experience natural selection and which do not. And they've devised observational, experimental and statistical ways to make this distinction. In the case of hemoglobin, the answer is obvious: selection couldn't act on color because in many animals the blood can't be seen through the skin. More important, mutant hemoglobins that have lost their ability to carry oxygen but remain red are invariably lethal.

Here's a more realistic example. Perhaps the most famous case of natural selection in action is the color change that occurred in Britain's "peppered moth" over the past 150 years. Before the Industrial Revolution, these moths had white wings speckled lightly with black, although avid collectors found a few all-black mutants. As pollution from manufacturing increased the concentration of suspended particles in the air, black moths became more numerous, and eventually predominated in many places. When clean air laws reduced Britain's pollution in the 1950s, the evolution of wing color reversed, and in most places the white color once again became common. The difference between white and black moths was shown to reside at a single gene.

What caused these evolutionary changes? There were several theories. One was that the target of selection wasn't the moth's color but the survival of caterpillars that, while not showing the color differences of adults, happened to be affected by the same gene. Another suggestion was that natural selection acted on color: perhaps sharp-sighted birds picked off moths whose color contrasted with that of the trees on which they rested. In unpolluted woods, lichen-covered trees are light-colored but turned black as pollution increased. This would give a selective advantage first to the dark-colored moths and then, as pollution abated, to light-colored moths.

F&P would presumably counsel us to give up at this point, since we can't, they say, distinguish between the counterfactuals of selection "for" larval survival and "for" adult color. But we can! Breeding experiments in the laboratory showed that the survival of caterpillars couldn't explain the increase and subsequent decline of the black form. In contrast, field experiments that involved observing predation on dead moths of different colors fastened to trees of different colors, and on live moths of different colors released in unpolluted woods, showed that selection on color was strong, easily able to explain the evolutionary changes observed in nature.

And we now have dozens of similar studies—in fish, birds, insects and plants—all successfully distinguishing those traits experiencing natural selection from those that are "free riders." Sadly, F&P show no awareness of this literature, which is hardly obscure, since it includes some of the famous cases, like the peppered moth, that we use to teach evolution to undergraduates.

Of course, in many cases we'll never know exactly which features experienced direct natural selection or how that selection worked. We can't return to the Jurassic, for instance, and find out why the stegosaurus had those big plates on its back. Were they radiators for regulating body temperature? Did they fend off predators? Or were they only a byproduct of some other adaptive change in the skeleton? Our inability to understand all the details, though, is hardly a reason to claim that natural selection doesn't work.

So if natural selection played at best a trivial role in evolution, what do F&P offer as an alternative explanation for the marvelous adaptations of plants and animals? Nothing. They finally admit that "we don't know what the mechanism of evolution is. As far as we can make out, nobody knows exactly how phenotypes evolve. We think that, quite possibly, they evolve in lots of different ways." After much demurring, they float the idea that "organisms 'catch' their phenotypes from their ecologies in something like the way that they catch their colds from their ecologies." Although this "explanation" links evolution to ecology, it's completely meaningless. How did ancestral whales catch their flukes and flippers from the water? How did ancestral birds catch their wings from the air? F&P don't say.

I've pondered long and hard how two thoughtful intellectuals could go so wrong. Behind much of F&P's animus toward natural selection, it seems, is their disdain for evolutionary psychology, which sees much of modern human behavior as the product of natural selection acting on our ancestors. (*What Darwin Got Wrong* includes an appendix of quotations from evolutionary psychologists, whom F&P label "unabashed adaptationists.") Here F&P have a point, for while much of evolutionary psychology is interesting, worthwhile science, it includes a speculative fringe (especially inviting to journalists) that proposes fanciful stories about how natural selection could produce behaviors like music-making, rape, clinical depression and even religion.

Fodor has long been an extreme rationalist who believes the mind is a logic machine and that the orderliness of our world must be deducible a priori from elegant laws. It's no surprise, then, that F&P produce a long diatribe against B.F. Skinner's behaviorism, the theory that animals (including humans) initially behave randomly and then repeat those behaviors that get rewarded. In its randomness, messiness and contingency, behaviorism resembles natural selection. And F&P are clearly infuriated by evolutionary psychologists' use of natural selection to explain not only human behavior but the human mind.

But evolutionary psychology is a red herring here. F&P are surely entitled to criticize evolutionary psychology, and evolutionary psychologists may be expected to reply. Motivations aside, F&P's attempt to undermine evolutionary biology is a quixotic and misguided undertaking. Their claim to have nullified 150 years of science, and one of humanity's proudest intellectual achievements, with some verbal legerdemain, is not only breathtakingly arrogant but willfully ignorant of modern biology. In the end, F&P's contrarian efforts are all belied by the world of Richard Dawkins—the flourishing field of modern evolutionary biology, where natural selection remains the only explanation for the wondrous adaptive complexity of organisms. ■

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# SHELF LIFE

## by JORDAN DAVIS

"IF A DREAM IS A REBUS, WHAT IS A play?" Leave it to poets to take a perfectly good rhetorical question such as this, from Nada Gordon's play *Distraction*, and come up with multiple answers, each less likely than the last, and all of them brimful with a belief in complete freedom of expression. With *The Kenning Anthology of Poets Theater* (Kenning Editions; paper $25.95), poets Kevin Killian and David Brazil have provided as friendly as possible a reintroduction to a genre that, in contemporary America, at least, has some ways to reclaim the world-historical heights of appeal it held among the ancient Greeks, the Elizabethans and in pre-Franco Spain.

Plays demand money, but will work for space and time. A few experimental troupes dedicated to poets' plays survived for a while in the '50s, most notably the Cambridge Poets Theater and a group out of Black Mountain College. The most convincing play in the collection is *Dutchman* by Amiri Baraka (then LeRoi Jones). That this 1964 play about the seduction of a young black man on the subway is the most current-sounding thing in the book says at least as much about Baraka's ear for dialogue and sense of dramatic action as it does about this city dweller's sense of *plus ça change*. Other standouts include a previously uncollected Frank O'Hara play and Kathy Acker's thrillingly chaotic *The Birth of the Poet*, which ranges from New York in the '80s to Propertius' Rome to a mosque.

The anthology does betray more than a touch of hostility to the needs of the uninitiated. As the editors put it: "Even the most radical texts in this book engage perforce in at least a few of theater's traditional trappings—the entrance, the curtain, the discovery scene—why, character itself—dialogue—conventions theater had built up over thousands of years." Can't say the poets didn't try. In the stage directions to his play *!The Feast!*, Michael McClure describes as "bestial speeches" the long passages in which actors only enunciate their characters' nonsense names (e.g., Yeorg, Nargath, Retorp, etc.).

*Jordan Davis's poems have appeared recently in* Poetry *and* The Nation.

TERESE SVOBODA HASN'T PUBLISHED plays yet, but it's one of the few genres she hasn't busted into. *Weapons Grade* (Arkansas; paper $16) is her fifth book of poems; she's also published four novels, a memoir about her late uncle's involvement in secret executions of black GIs in postwar Okinawa and a translation of songs of cattle herders along the Nile. She's no provincial. Personable without stooping to ingratiation, her work is free of stylized narcissism. This isn't to say she's an exemplary character or, even deadlier, a plain-spoken chronicler. In fact, she's a little odd. Take the opening of "Mom as Fly," a poem with a touch of Electra complex:

> A fly with a human head
> heads for your screen. It's Mom,
> toting groceries and laundry

If you've been some time away from poetry, this might look like the start of a confessional sitcom, the outcome of decades of poets competing to retail the most outlandish family disasters. But during Svoboda's career, it's been increasingly fashionable for poets to bleach out anything as messy as a true story or an awkward word, reducing poems to mood extract—the bleakest confrontations and direst predictions. Svoboda likes that too, but she can't help making musical comedy out of it.

Previous books centered on long narrative verse sequences: reimagining Faust as a starlet, uncovering incest on a family farm. The new Svoboda poem is short, touches on a fear or wish and is a kick to decode:

> The lake stood and pudding—
> shook, the sails slack and dry.
>
> Two men sang wholly songs—
> No oaths—then drank a toast to me.

Svoboda likes to play with words. She also likes always to be saying something worth your time, which is less of a universal practice. In Svoboda's case, it comes down to surviving without turning sour. We can always use more examples of how to do that.

A SUCCESSFUL ENGINEER IN THE AUTO industry, Bob Hicok won a book prize from the University of Wisconsin in 1995. He soon gave up designing car parts for teaching writing. His sixth collection, *Words for Empty and Words for Full* (Pittsburgh; paper $14.95), includes several poems about teaching, which ordinarily would be a mild subject, except that he is talking about Virginia Tech in 2007:

> *He put moisturizer on the morning he*
> *shot*
> *thirty-three people*. That stands out.
> The desire
> to be soft. I could tell the guy from
> NPR
> that's what I want, to be soft, or the
> guy
> from the *LA Times*, or the guy from
> CNN who says
> we should chat. Such a casual word,
> "chat."
> I'm chatting to myself now. You did
> not
> do enough, I write to myself, about
> the kid
> who turned in writing about killing
> a few buildings from where he
> killed.

Very few poets reveal the gift of feeling free to say anything; even fewer develop their art to respond to turns of mind without causing the poem to stall. The empathy in Hicok's accounts of love, work and death runs from the brutally cute, as when his wife emerges from cancer treatment "happy as a torch/ in a Frankenstein flick" to the cosmic: after considering day after day of mass-slaying headlines, Hicok concludes, "I am telling you, Alpha Centauri, man to star:/run." ■

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An engraving of Roelandt Savery's dodo portrait (circa 1625), from Hugh Strickland and Alexander Melville's *The Dodo and Its Kindred* (1848)

# Icons of Oblivion

**by ARI KELMAN**

In the early 1780s Thomas Jefferson, having just witnessed the birth of a nation, struggled to comprehend the death of an entire species. Jefferson wondered if it could be possible that the animal we know today as the mammoth had entirely ceased to exist. Gathering observations for one of this country's first great scientific and literary masterpieces, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson decided that the answer had to be no. His mind shackled by a venerable scientific theory known as the great chain of being—the notion that all life in God's creation took the form of hierarchical links that could never be sundered—he refused to accept the reality of extinction. "Such is the economy of nature," Jefferson wrote, "that no instance can be produced of her having permitted any one race of her animals to become extinct; of her having formed any link in her great work so weak as to be broken." Waving away the absence of mammoths in the settled portion of the continent, Jefferson speculated that perhaps the elusive giant ranged outside the gaze of contemporary observers, lumbering throughout the landscape onto which he routinely projected his dreams for the young United States: the West.

*Ari Kelman teaches history at the University of California, Davis.*

**Nature's Ghosts**
*Confronting Extinction From the Age of Jefferson to the Age of Ecology.*
By Mark V. Barrow Jr.
Chicago. 497 pp. $35.

**Rewilding the World**
*Dispatches From the Conservation Revolution.*
By Caroline Fraser.
Metropolitan. 400 pp. $28.50.

Beyond bowing to the scientific state of the art, Jefferson the naturalist remained answerable to Jefferson the nationalist. Europe's great cities might feature sumptuous palaces and vast cathedrals, he allowed, as well as libraries groaning beneath the weight of humankind's accumulated knowledge and museums stocked with centuries' worth of masterpieces. But the United States boasted natural wonders that beggared description. Abundance in the New World seemingly overflowed into limitlessness: forests stretching to the horizon, mountain ranges of surpassing majesty and curiosities like Virginia's Natural Bridge, which Jefferson owned and labeled "the most sublime of Nature's works." For Jefferson the patriot, America's natural advantages counterbalanced Europe's prodigious cultural patrimony. So in picking a fight with the Old World, he no doubt found it prudent to recruit a massive beast like the mammoth to his side.

A worldview in which extinction appeared beyond the pale of the natural order and an affront to national destiny now sounds at once anachronistic and alluring. Today we find ourselves in the midst of what scientists believe is the sixth great era of extinction. Five times previously, between 450 million and 65 million years ago, huge numbers of species died off, including during the Cretaceous period, when, after a gigantic asteroid or volcanic eruptions abruptly altered the earth's environment, most of the dinosaurs shuffled off this mortal coil. The current wave of extinctions, which began within the past 100,000 years, is different; people are the cause of the disruption this time. As modern humans scattered across the globe, wherever they went they brought with them exotic diseases and seeds of invasive species. They exploited the resources they found: depleting fisheries, felling vast stands of timber and overhunting game. And as their numbers grew—from roughly 5 million 10,000 years ago to nearly 7 billion today—the habitats they despoiled precipitated the current crisis. By the century's end, perhaps 50 percent of the now extant species will have died off. An alphabet soup of animals has already disappeared: the Arabian gazelle, the bulldog rat, the Caribbean monk seal. Hundreds of others are gone, and an unknown number will likely soon join them.

Mark Barrow is less concerned with gazing into the hazy future than clarifying the growing awareness of humankind's role in extinction. In *Nature's Ghosts*, he explains how naturalists, driven by affection for the nonhuman world, gradually became worried about the "specter of extinction" and eventually "mobilized to act." By following their example, Barrow suggests, we might still chart a course from this precarious moment to a future of biodiversity.

The course first changed around the turn of the nineteenth century when Georges Cuvier, a French naturalist, snapped the hold the great chain of being had on scientific discourse by pointing to irrefutable evidence of extinction embedded in the fossil record. Scientists began asking how and why, rather than if, animals had disappeared through the years. By the 1830s, British geologist Charles Lyell had made another logical leap, positing a competitive natural order. Species, Lyell insisted, were forever locked in a "struggle for existence."

From there, many naturalists, including Charles Darwin, focused on the extinction of island animals, especially flightless birds

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like the dodo. Popularly depicted as having resembled a botched hybrid of a goose, a turkey and an ostrich, the ungainly dodo became, in Barrow's words, a "veritable icon of oblivion." But rather than mourning the bird's loss, most scientists at the time blamed the victim. Too slow, too stupid, too fat, the dodo, conventional wisdom dictated, had deserved its fate. Other extinct animals, including the moa (whose gangly skeleton suggests an early prototype for the bird Kevin from Pixar's recent film *Up*), were also scorned by naturalists, who hadn't yet begun advocating for the protection of species.

When Europeans first arrived in North America, millions of bison thundered across the continent's interior, and billions of passenger pigeons sometimes blotted out the sun when they took flight. But by 1900 these animals had all but disappeared, preyed on by hunters serving an increasingly voracious market for hides and feathers. Around the same time, a second industrial revolution transformed the nation's economy. Hundreds of thousands of immigrants, seeking a better life, began arriving annually; American cities swelled to previously unfathomable sizes; and settlers scrambled overland to fill the last unoccupied corners of the West, "closing the frontier," as Frederick Jackson Turner put it in a widely cited address delivered at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. The pace and scale of these changes threatened to overwhelm increasingly nostalgic Americans, who clung to threatened symbols of the nation's past.

For many concerned onlookers, steeped in Jeffersonian and Turnerian intellectual currents, the West served as a synecdoche for the United States, and the imperiled bison served as a synecdoche for the West. If the rugged bison died out, then so too, they worried, might America, a nation they felt was being feminized by an economy that alienated workers from the land; radicalized by labor activists preaching class warfare in exploding cities; and mongrelized by ostensibly unassimilable immigrants (Catholics, Asians and Jews).

So when William Hornaday, a naturalist at the Smithsonian, realized in 1886 that fewer than 300 bison still roamed the West, he panicked. There was nothing else to do, he reasoned, but embark on a scientific expedition to shoot or capture some of the remaining beasts. Since the prevailing natural history of Hornaday's times was, in Barrow's words, "firmly rooted in collection and taxonomy," such a rash cure seemed far better than the disease. But upon returning home, Hornaday blazed a new trail. He didn't just stuff, catalog and display his quarry. He also called for protection of the species, experimented with captive breeding programs and considered methods of restocking the Great Plains with bison. A year later, Hornaday had six of the animals grazing on the National Mall. A little more than a decade after that, the Bronx Zoo featured some of his bison. And at the dawn of the century he loosed a herd to ramble in an Oklahoma wildlife sanctuary. The bison would survive, a symbol not just of the nation but also of the growing efficacy of an emerging conservation movement.

The passenger pigeon, by contrast, went the way of the dodo. Although the shaggy bison is hardly a fetching beast, its utility as an icon far outstripped the pigeon's. Pigeons aren't cuddly. Even though new conservation organizations like the Audubon Society lobbied on the bird's behalf, by 1909 the last pair of passenger pigeons, George and Martha Washington, were perched in the Cincinnati Zoo. George died a year later, and Martha followed in 1914. Zookeepers encased her corpse in ice and shipped it to the Smithsonian, where the ornithologist who performed the autopsy issued a dire prediction: "The day will come when practically all the world's aviafauna will have become utterly extinct. Such a fate is coming to pass now, with far greater rapidity than most people realize." Museum officials then mounted and displayed Martha's body, a macabre warning to visitors that even the most abundant species, absent stewardship, might soon disappear. A few years later the last Carolina parakeet died, also at the Cincinnati Zoo. One wonders if the animals still at the zoo, apparently a cradle of extinction, sought transfers to other facilities.

Throughout *Nature's Ghosts*, Barrow sympathizes with the naturalists he studies yet almost never ignores their warts. Hornaday, for instance, was often a crank, his advocacy for animals born in part out of anxieties over racial decay. In 1913 he published a 400-page call to arms, *Our Vanishing Wildlife*, demanding protection for threatened species. In one breath he extolled the virtues of "gentlemen sportsmen," the white knights who, he argued, formed the "bone and sinew of wild life preservation." But in the next he damned so-called pot hunters, people who took game to feed their families. African-Americans and Southern European immigrants, whom he referred to as "pestilence that walketh at noonday," came in for especially harsh treatment. Hornaday had plenty of company—men like Theodore Roosevelt and Madison Grant who, Barrow suggests, "tended to be deeply ambivalent about the forces of modernity that were transforming the American landscape." Their ambivalence often manifested itself as racism, xenophobia or blood lust. During his 1909 expedition to Africa, Roosevelt assured the world of his virility by sponsoring a genteel blood bath: eleven elephants, fourteen rhinoceroses and seventeen lions counted among the more than 500 animals killed for sport.

Only Barrow's treatment of Aldo Leopold, a secular saint in the pantheon of modern American environmentalism, flirts with hagiography. In the years between 1900 and 1940, federal authorities, including Leopold, hunted predators far more frequently than they protected them. As late as 1931 the Biological Survey devoted three-quarters of its annual budget to eradicating animals like the coyote and the gray wolf. At that time, Leopold, a federal forester and devotee of William Hornaday's, began expressing doubts about the killing after he studied the notorious Kaibab deer crisis.

In 1906, eager to increase the number of mule deer in the Kaibab National Forest, sited on the Grand Canyon's North Rim, the Biological Survey began systematically eliminating all the predators in the area. Within fifteen years an exploding deer population had run short of food. Disease and hunger then began culling the herd, work that predators once would have done. A great die-off ensued. Leopold diagnosed the problem in 1933: overweening hubris. His solution? Apply an ecological worldview, focused on the interconnectedness of all organisms, to managing wildlife. Two years later he helped found the Wilderness Society, and he soon published "Thinking Like a Mountain," still a sacred text for environmentalists. In that essay, Leopold recalls an episode from his days as a young forester, when he killed a mother wolf. "We reached the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes," he writes. "I was young then, and full of trigger itch; I thought that because few wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunters' paradise. But after seeing the fierce green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view." Leopold's epiphany became the foundation for what he called a "land ethic," the idea that people must extend their ethical considerations to include other members of their complex, interwoven biotic community, including all manner of nonhuman species.

The postwar years in the United States, Barrow argues, became an "Age of Ecology."

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Confronted by the apocalyptic threat of nuclear annihilation, many Americans embraced ecological tenets and joined a popular environmental movement. In these same years, naturalists, whose worldview often owed more to Aldo Leopold than Thomas Jefferson, increasingly embraced activism and found a willing audience among the public, and eventually within the government. Political will rose to meet the environmental crisis of the '60s and '70s, leading to passage of endangered species acts in 1966, 1969 and 1973. This high-water mark lingered until the mid-1990s, when Congress, under Newt Gingrich, began rolling back environmental regulations. The United States, Barrow concludes, has "effectively abandoned its long-established role as a world leader in endangered species protection."

In *Rewilding the World*, Caroline Fraser travels the globe, visiting sites where naturalists are struggling to return habitats to a wild state. Rather than defining her terms—she never explains precisely what she means by "wild," for instance—Fraser tells inspiring stories about scientists reintroducing wolves in the American West, creating wilderness corridors in Latin America, protecting forests in Europe, opening peace parks in the Middle East, saving elephants and big cats in Africa and restoring ruined agricultural land in Australia. Fraser's subjects are thinking big, sometimes working on a continental scale. She claims that they offer perhaps the last and certainly the best hope for a planet teetering on the brink of biotic collapse. "Conservation biology and its epiphanies," Fraser notes, "constitute a latter-day Copernican revolution. Just as Copernicus revealed that the earth was not the fixed center of the universe, so conservation biologists have found that *Homo sapiens* is not the independent actor he has imagined himself to be." She is, in sum, a true believer in the high church of ecology. So while Barrow the scholar typically moderates his tone and enthusiasm, Fraser the acolyte sings her subjects' praises.

Except when she doesn't. For every success story recounted in *Rewilding the World*, there are multiple tales of catastrophic failure. On one side of the ledger stands a massive preserve in Costa Rica, its future bright because one of its creators, a visionary biologist named Dan Janzen, understands not only the region's delicate ecology but also the vagaries of high finance. Janzen had the foresight to create a huge endowment for the park, a critical component of what he calls sustainable conservation. On the other side of the ledger, though, are wolves being slaughtered by irate ranchers in the desert Southwest; big cats and elephants being poached by tribal people in Africa, hunters too hungry to be troubled by conservation politics; and potentially vibrant peace parks sitting empty along the borders of North and South Korea, India and Pakistan, Iran and Iraq, and Israel and Jordan, as the parks' founders wait for peace to arrive in these regions.

Fraser, like Barrow, suggests that such failures are often rooted in history. In Africa, for example, conservationists once served as agents of colonialism, much as in the United States activists like William Hornaday advocated dispossessing Native Americans of land that could be transformed into parks. Oddly, though, Fraser doesn't answer contemporary critics, even when they crop up in her book, who believe that the modern environmental movement hasn't transcended its roots, that it remains too top-down and that rewilding is a luxury only elites can afford. For Fraser, such complaints are beside the point. In her view, "the environment must become a top priority" or the planet will enter a prolonged "demographic winter." The crisis is existential: rewilding is a matter of life or death for everyone. That may be true, but it ignores the thorny politics of environmentalism, the reality that while scientists can identify endangered animals, they usually cannot preserve species without marshaling popular support and political will to their side. Instead of grappling with this issue, Fraser offers doomsday predictions and a discordant anecdote about her own engagement with rewilding—she feeds threatened prairie dogs discarded produce from Whole Foods.

The good news is that absent ongoing degradation, it turns out many threatened species and the landscapes they inhabit have rebounded remarkably quickly. But there's a hitch. The conditions most conducive to fostering an ecosystem's rebirth are deadly to human beings. In the wake of the cold war, for example, scientists discovered that what had been known as the Death Zone, the narrow parcel of land separating East from West Germany, was among "the most undisturbed natural areas" in Europe. Similarly, intractable strife has transformed the Korean Demilitarized Zone into an "Eden" entirely given over to wild nature, but only because it's a no man's land. As Fraser notes: "The 38th parallel, a border 155 miles long and 2½ miles wide, guarded by two million North and South Korean soldiers, is believed to be the best-preserved piece of land on earth. It is also the most dangerous. No human being has set foot in it in fifty-five years." So long as war must serve as rewilding's most potent ally, Aldo Leopold's land ethic remains little more than a utopian dream.

And so, even as Fraser demonstrates that "land and wildlife recover when we leave them alone," she admits that deeper questions linger: "Can we find the will to restrain ourselves without the threat of annihilation? Can we do it in time?" On balance, *Rewilding the World* offers readers at best ambivalent answers. It seems that too many people remain enthralled by myths of abundance, or by the idea that the planet belongs to the human race; they doubt environmentalists' good faith, or live in circumstances so desperate that subsistence understandably supersedes conservation as a concern. For these people, sharing the planet with their nonhuman neighbors, on something like equal terms, seems as unlikely an outcome as extinction once did to eighteenth-century naturalists. Fraser remains resolute, going so far as to report on a futuristic rewilding scheme. Scientists recently discovered a beautifully preserved mammoth whose DNA, she says, "may, one day, help to resurrect her species." Jefferson, who in life rarely shied away from gloating, may just have stirred in his crypt and muttered, "I told you so." ■

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**NEW *NATION* ASSOCIATES DISCUSSION GROUP** forming in Southwest Kansas (Hugoton). Contact: Jack Golding (620) 428-5647 or golding6231@yahoo.com.

**ST. LOUIS *NATION* DISCUSSION GROUP** invites you to join us every fourth Sunday of the month. For information, e-mail lydialewis@att.net.

**LANSING, MICH.,** *Nation* discussion group is looking for new members. We also would like to link up with any progressive discussion groups meeting in Michigan and assist anyone throughout the state seeking to establish a *Nation* discussion group. Contact: richardc@michcom.net or (517) 627-4591.

**BOSTON HUMANIST COMMUNITY.** Free Sunday lectures. Ethical culture. Harvard Square. Social activity groups. bostonethical.org, (617) 739-9050.

**SAN FRANCISCO** *Nation* discussion group. For information, e-mail evilhess@gmail.com.

**NASHVILLE, TENN.,** *Nation* discussion group. Contact Howard Romaine. hromaine@gmail.com.

**BERKELEY, CALIF.,** *Nation* discussion group. E-mail prehend@gmail.com.

**SAN JOSE, CALIF.,** discussion group meets the fourth Sunday of the month, 1 to 3 PM, downtown. Contact Lois at loisaalbq@yahoo.com for more info.

**ASHEVILLE, NC,** *Nation* discussion group forming. Contact mgibney@unca.edu.

**SPOKANE/INLAND NORTHWEST** *Nation* discussion group: PO Box 293, Cheney, WA 99004; locus29@aol.com.

**SAN ANTONIO** *Nation* discussion group. Second Mondays, Grady's Bar-B-Q at San Pedro and Jackson Keller. Contact lenwheeler@satx.rr.com for more information.

**RICHMOND, VA,** *Nation* discussion group is seeking new members. Contact Wayne Young, (804) 232-8521, youngwayne88838@aol.com.

**A NEW *NATION* UTAH YAHOO GROUP** has been created at groups.yahoo.com/group/thenationutah. To join, contact Sam Evans, (801) 791-8089 or sameritech@yahoo.com.

**ROCK HILL/FORT MILL, SC,** *Nation* discussion group forming. Contact addgroup@comporium.net.

## PSYCHOTHERAPY

**CHICAGO PSYCHOTHERAPIST,** twenty-five years, all issues, including depression, anxiety, relationships, creative blocks. Sliding scale, insurance. Deborah Hellerstein, PhD, (312) 409-9516. therapyinchicago.com.

**SAN FRANCISCO PSYCHOTHERAPIST.** Anxiety, depression, relationship issues. Near USF. Sliding scale. (415) 289-6990. paulabranchholt.com. Paula Holt, LCSW.

## REAL ESTATE

**MOVING TO FAIRFIELD COUNTY, CONNECTICUT?** Realtor seeks clients of same persuasion as a *Nation* subscriber. Contact (203) 259-2519 or madgecanning.com.

**LEFT COAST, US.** Work with The Realtor Who's on Your Side. Norma J.F. Harrison. (510) 526-3968. (866) 264-9029. NormaHa@pacbell.net.

**GREATER SACRAMENTO–AREA REALTOR** seeks progressive clients. Margo McBride, Remax Professionals. (916) 721-8334. margomcbride@comcast.net. margomcbride.com.

**SANTA FE: PROGRESSIVE REALTOR®** seeks same in clients. Peter Kahn, Santa Fe Realty Partners. (505) 690-4840 cell, (877) 982-6207 toll free, or peter@peterkahn.com.

## TRAVEL

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**ATTENTION CHAUTAUQUANS:** Summer vacation! Three-, four- and seven-day visits. Day passes, two-room suites, breakfast/parking and shuttle. Chautauqua Suites and Expo Center. Call (716) 269-7829 or visit chautauquasuites.com.

# Events

**NATIONAL**

### Economy Connection

■ War and global capitalism. Unemployment and recession. For speakers and resources on these and related topics, contact Economy Connection, a project of the Union for Radical Political Economics. We can provide speakers for formal or informal events sponsored by community groups, unions, high schools, colleges or political organizations. Our speakers can talk about wealth and poverty, and the economic forces that generate increasing income inequality between and within countries. They can cut through the confusing terminology that is used to prevent ordinary, intelligent people (with and without college degrees) from understanding and participating in discussions on the policies that affect our lives. Tell us what you need, and we will look for a speaker who is right for you. Contact us at (201) 792-7459 or soapbox@urpe.org. Join URPE: urpe.org; (413) 577-0806; URPE@labornet.org.

*The advertising deadline for Events is every Thursday. Rates: $210 for 50 words; $260 for 75 words, additional words (above 75) $2.00 each. To place an ad, call Amanda at (212) 209-5414.*

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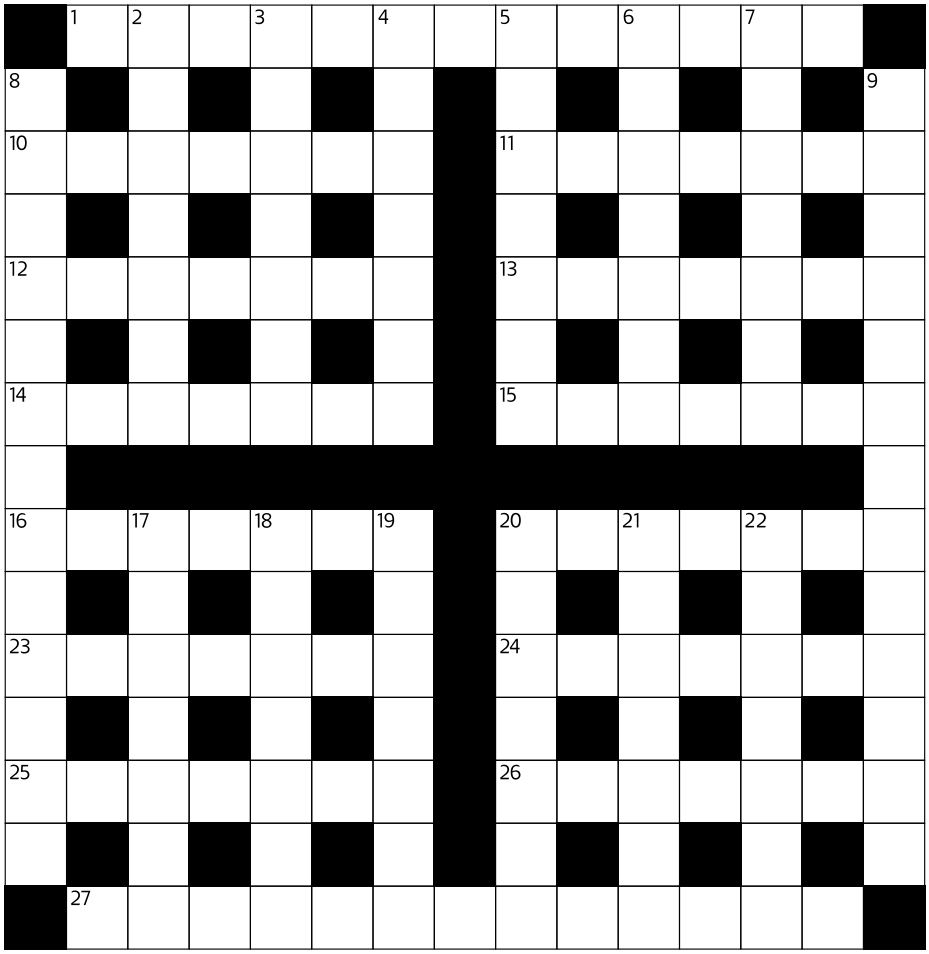
# Puzzle No. 771

FRANK W. LEWIS



## ACROSS

**1** Heavy character of the book, perhaps—the forward-looking sort. (4-5,4)

**10** He might consider craftsmanship a strain. (7)

**11** Elucidate what might have to be discovered in the alpine sort. (7)

**12** Make like to study 1040, for example. (7)

**13** In raising havoc, a dog might get on the table. (7)

**14** Insulation, but not to a principle of the islands of Langerhans. (7)

**15** Clement might be responsible for such a ten-line composition. (7)

**16** Where many workers go for obsequies, perhaps. (7)

**20** Append. (7)

**23** In older days, one might have been found in either Western Europe or Georgia. (7)

**24** Flickering, or softly radiant. (7)

**25** Cementing a sort of gun in it? (7)

**26** Writers have dipped into this quite often. (7)

**27** People pay more for it in cars, and less for it in workers. (13)

## DOWN

**2** Obviously excursions. (7)

**3** Strip, like piles do. (7)

**4** Spirit in an honorable name? (7)

**5** Good hitters are able to do it longer, one can usually see. (7)

**6** This storm is nothing in a sort of snake? (7)

**7** Appease the locality at the inside? (7)

**8** What makes unionism act so hypocritical? (13)

**9** Is it made by fat only? Untrue, in a manner not attended by prosperity. (13)

**17** He's low German, and not quite himself. (7)

**18** He has a base position. (7)

**19** It takes money to set a leg broken at this place. (7)

**20** Defiles. (7)

**21** Run into your relatives from the country? (7)

**22** Unity makes no sense here, it seems. (7)

This puzzle originally appeared in the May 10, 1958, issue.

## SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 260

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C | O | U | N | T | E | R | S | | P | A | R | C | E | L |
| O | | N | | A | | O | | A | | N | | A | | A |
| P | R | I | M | P | | N | I | C | K | N | A | M | E | D |
| E | | O | | I | | D | | A | | E | | E | | Y |
| C | O | N | S | O | L | E | | C | O | X | C | O | M | B |
| K | | J | | C | | A | | I | | E | | | | I |
| | X | A | N | A | D | U | | A | N | D | O | V | E | R |
| G | | C | | | | | | | | | | E | | D |
| A | S | K | A | N | C | E | | P | A | L | T | R | Y | |
| S | | | | O | | L | | I | | A | | Y | | S |
| M | I | L | K | S | O | P | | C | A | M | E | L | O | T |
| E | | O | | T | | A | | A | | E | | I | | A |
| T | H | E | O | R | I | S | T | S | | N | I | G | H | T |
| E | | S | | U | | O | | S | | T | | H | | E |
| R | E | S | U | M | E | | C | O | S | S | E | T | E | D |

The Nation (ISSN 0027-8378) is published weekly (except for the second week in January, and biweekly the third week of July through the second week of September) by The Nation Company, L.P. © 2010 in the U.S.A. by The Nation Company, L.P., 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003. (212) 209-5400. Washington Bureau: Suite 308, 110 Maryland Avenue N.E., Washington, DC 20002. (202) 546-2239. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Subscription orders, changes of address and all subscription inquiries: The Nation, PO Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235, or call 1-800-333-8536. Publications Mail Agreement No: 40041477. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to Bleuchip International, PO Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2. Canada Post: Publications Mail Agreement No.: 40612608. When ordering a subscription, please allow 4-6 weeks for receipt of your first issue and for all subscription transactions. Basic annual subscription price: $79 for 47 issues. Back issues $6 prepaid ($8 foreign) from: The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003. The Nation is available on microfilm from: University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Nation, PO Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235. Printed in U.S.A. on recycled paper.

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# Are you in love with your home, but afraid of your staircase?

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a) more oil

b) more natural gas

c) more wind

d) more solar

e) more biofuels

f) energy efficiency

✓g) all of the above

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